

WHY SCHOOLS DO NOT RELEASE ASVAB SCORES TO  
MILITARY RECRUITERS

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

### WHY SCHOOLS DO NOT RELEASE ASVAB SCORES TO MILITARY RECRUITERS, by Major Gregory V. Humble, 88 pages.

An increasing number of schools are not releasing ASVAB scores to military recruiters. In 2004, 3.8 percent of test scores were not released, compared to 13.91 percent in 2011. The decision to release scores is made by school officials. Policies are being made at the school district level, and at the state level to ensure that schools do not release scores to military recruiters.

Students, parents, and patrons in school districts are primarily concerned with the issue of student privacy when scores are released. Aided by advocacy organizations, local school districts, and state legislatures have approved policies, and passed laws that restrict schools from releasing ASVAB scores to military recruiters. When scores are not released to military recruiters, it makes the job of a recruiter more difficult to contact students who are qualified for military service. As a result students may not receive information about opportunities available to them with a career in the military. The Army has not achieved its goal in quality student enlistments since 2002. When scores are released, that list provides military recruiters with a list of pre-qualified leads.

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## ACRONYMS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CEP	Career Exploration Program
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DoD	Department of Defense
FERPA	Family Education Records Protection Act
GA	Grad Alpha
GB	Grad Bravo
MEPCOM	Military Entrance Processing Command
MEPS	Military Entrance Processing Station
MET	Military Entrance Test
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
SA	Senior Alpha
USAREC	United States Army Recruiting Command



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

According to *Techniques*, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), “Is the most widely used multiple aptitude test battery in the U.S.”<sup>1</sup> The ASVAB was developed in 1968 by the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory and was first offered to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade high school students as a means to help provide enlistment eligibility information for military service.<sup>2</sup> The ASVAB consists of 8 short tests in the areas of:<sup>3</sup>

1. General Science
2. Arithmetic Reasoning
3. Word Knowledge
4. Paragraph Comprehension
5. Auto and Shop Information
6. Mathematics Knowledge
7. Mechanical Comprehension
8. Electronics Information

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<sup>1</sup>“A Closer Look at the ASVAB CEP Program,” *Techniques* (March 1, 2004): 48, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>2</sup>Terry R. Armstrong, Albert B. Chalupsky, Marie R. Dalldorf, and Donald H. McLaughlin, “Armed Services Vocational Battery: Validation for Civilian Occupations” (American Institutions for Research, August 1988), 1.

<sup>3</sup>US Army Recruiting Command Manual 3-01, *Recruiter Handbook* (Fort Knox, KY: November 22, 2011), [http://www.usarec.army.mil/im/formpub/REC\\_PUBS/man3\\_01.pdf](http://www.usarec.army.mil/im/formpub/REC_PUBS/man3_01.pdf) (accessed May 16, 2012), 6-5.

The test was normed in 1980 and underwent a revision that implemented the Career Exploration Program (CEP) in 1992.<sup>4</sup> The CEP was designed to provide students and educators more information about careers that included career aptitude information and that also allowed students to answer questions based on personal preferences.<sup>5</sup>

As cited in *Techniques*, the ASVAB “concentrates on students’ interests and does not evaluate schools or teachers.”<sup>6</sup> In addition to the multi-aptitude battery, students complete a 90 item interest inventory based on John Holland’s theory of career choice.<sup>7</sup> Holland developed six codes that correspond with the interest inventory:

1. Realistic
2. Investigative
3. Artistic
4. Social
5. Enterprising
6. Conventional

Students receive three interest codes which are then used with “OCCU-Find” a career exploration tool that includes over 400 occupations.

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<sup>4</sup>Janet E. Wall, “An Example of Assessment’s Role in Career Exploration,” *Journal of Counseling and Development* 72, no. 6 (July 1, 1994): 608. <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>5</sup>Jeffrey D. Barnes, Michelle Dela Rosa, Janice H. Laurence, and Janet E. Wall, “Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program,” *Military Psychology* 10, no. 4 (December 1998): 226.

<sup>6</sup>“A Closer Look at the ASVAB CEP Program,” 48.

<sup>7</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, “Fact Sheet,” [http://www.asvabprogram.com/downloads/ASVAB\\_Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.asvabprogram.com/downloads/ASVAB_Fact%20Sheet.pdf) (accessed September 24, 2011).

The ASVAB and CEP provide mutual benefits to schools, students, and the military. The ASVAB provides a career exploration tool to the educator and student at no cost to the school since the ASVAB program is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD). Students benefit from the test results because they demonstrate both military and civilian career paths that they are suited for. The military also benefits with increased access to the school and, if scores are released a list of students that may qualify for military service.

The ASVAB helps recruiters develop a relationship with school officials and faculty by building trust and rapport. Recruiters may come back and offer interpretation of the test results, giving the recruiters increased access to students that may be interested in military service. Although there is access to the student, recruiters may not conduct recruiting activities during the interpretation. When the school selects the option to release the scores to the military, recruiters are given a list of students and their test results. This list serves as a lead generation source for recruiters,<sup>8</sup> which is beneficial because it helps recruiters determine who is eligible for military service based on a branch of service's minimum Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score.

Even when a school selects the option to not release test scores to recruiters, the results of the test are still maintained by the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM), the organization responsible for administering the test. Test scores remain valid for a period of two years. When an applicant initiates the enlistment process a

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<sup>8</sup>“ASVAB Exposed,” *Objector* (July 1, 2005): 15, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

request for MEPCOM data is processed. So even if a school does not release test scores, individual results may still be accessed at a later date.

Participation in the ASVAB is voluntary and participation does not obligate a student to join the military. Schools may make the ASVAB mandatory for students, however a recruiter cannot suggest that schools make the test mandatory students. If the ASVAB is made mandatory, that is a requirement from the school and not the military. Many schools offer the ASVAB and students voluntarily participate in the test.

According to the ASVAB-CEP fact sheet, 49 percent of CEP participants plan to attend a 4 year college, and only 13 percent intend to pursue a career in the military.<sup>9</sup> The test is traditionally taken in the 11th or 12th grade. If the ASVAB is not taken in high school, the test is offered by MEPCOM at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) or a Military Entrance Test (MET) site as part of the enlistment process, albeit without the career exploration program. The ASVAB is used as one of many qualification standards which determine enlistment eligibility.

The ASVAB is important because it determines the AFQT score. Military occupational specialties (MOS) require a minimum AFQT score and demonstrated aptitude in specific areas measured in the ASVAB. Since the test is inexpensive to administer compared to the physical medical examination, an applicant will take the ASVAB first to ensure qualification before taking the physical examination to ensure that an applicant is medically qualified. When the test is conducted at a high school and scores are released to the military, the results provide recruiters with names of students that pre-qualify for military service.

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<sup>9</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, “Fact Sheet.”

Table 1. Accessions from ASVAB Career Exploration Program

Accessions Aptitude Tests as values	ENLISTMENT FROM ASVAB CEP ONLY	PERCENTAGE	ENLISTMENT FROM ASVAB CEP WITH 2ND ASVAB AT MEPS	PERCENTAGE	COMBINED ASVAB CEP AND ASVAB CEP WITH 2ND ASVAB	PERCENTAGE	ENLISTMENT FROM ASVAB	PERCENTAGE	Total Tests
2004	6,981	2.95%	23,058	9.75%	30,039	12.70%	206,367	87.29%	236,406
2005	8,500	3.93%	23,709	10.98%	32,209	14.91%	183,813	85.09%	216,022
2006	8,546	3.45%	24,476	9.89%	33,022	13.34%	214,570	86.66%	247,592
2007	7,887	3.22%	22,236	9.07%	30,123	12.29%	215,057	87.71%	245,180
2008	7,402	2.91%	21,187	8.33%	28,589	11.24%	225,652	88.76%	254,241
2009	5,748	2.49%	17,577	7.62%	23,325	10.11%	207,455	89.89%	230,780
2010	5,516	2.44%	18,058	7.99%	23,574	10.43%	202,561	89.58%	226,135
2011	5,476	2.63%	20,291	9.74%	25,767	12.37%	182,462	87.63%	208,229

Source: Modified by author from ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011), 30.

To help determine how effective the ASVAB is in reaching high school students for enlistment, table 1 demonstrates accessions from the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. A range of 2.44 percent-3.93 percent of overall enlistments into the military are based strictly on the ASVAB taken at the high school from the years 2004-2011. Some applicants that took the ASVAB CEP in high school take the ASVAB again at the MEPS or a MET site. Reasons for a second test include: test scores are only valid for two years and results may have expired, some students do not put their Social Security number on the test taken in high school (it is not required), or applicants may re-take the test to obtain a higher score. This includes an additional range of 7.62 percent-10.98 percent of all accessions that occur where an applicant was first exposed to the ASVAB in high school. With these applicants returning, the high school ASVAB CEP program is ultimately leading to a range of 10.11 percent-14.91 percent of all accessions into the military. At first look, the ASVAB CEP is only responsible for a small percentage of

accessions into the military, however with the number of people that return, the ASVAB CEP leads to more than a tenth of all accessions into the military. Conversely, table 1 shows that a range of 85.09 percent–89.89 percent of enlistments into the military did not directly come from ASVAB CEP administered in high school. Most enlistments come from taking an ASVAB at MEPS or a MET site, the two other alternatives aside from taking the test in high school.

### Statement of the Problem

Problem Statement: The ASVAB was developed by the Department of Defense to determine enlistment eligibility. Each branch of the military has a minimum AFQT score that is required in order to be eligible for that branch of service. The test is administered by the MEPCOM. The ASVAB is marketed as a career exploration program. High schools can elect to have the test administered at the school. The school receives the benefit of helping students decide a future career path based on where the students demonstrate aptitude. The military benefits, especially when scores are released to recruiters because the scores help determine who is eligible for military service. The ASVAB results for occupations align with the sixteen Department of Education Career Clusters where students in high school pick an area to concentrate their studies on throughout their high school career. Despite a mutual benefit for the school, student, and military, many schools do not schedule an ASVAB to be administered at their school, and not all students elect to take the ASVAB. Of the schools that do participate in the ASVAB, many schools elect to not release the scores to military recruiters.



### Significance of the Problem

Companies in the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) are assigned a monthly recruitment mission to accomplish. An emphasis of the command is to meet or exceed high school senior alpha (SA) enlistment objectives. For the Army, a high school senior that scores 50 or higher on the ASVAB is considered a SA. Many companies in USAREC routinely do not achieve their assigned SA mission. The only year that USAREC achieved its SA enlistment objective was in 2002. This could be a result of a surge in enlistments due to patriotism after the country was attacked on September 11, 2001. Table 2 demonstrates that USAREC has consistently failed to achieve its SA objective with exception of 2002.

Table 2. Regular Army Senior Alpha Mission Accomplishment

Regular Army Senior Alpha			
Year	Mission	Achieve	Gross
2002	12002	15777	131.45%
2003	0	14210	0
2004	15373	12014	78.15%
2005	19778	8910	45.05%
2006	23376	8200	35.08%
2007	18551	6672	35.97%
2008	19090	8234	43.13%
2009	19726	9368	47.49%
2010	16079	9232	57.42%
2011	12332	8791	71.29%

*Source:* Table created by author using data from Stephen L. Deane, Operations Chief, 5th Brigade, USAREC, e-mail to author, 25 April 2012.

Results from the database query that populates table 2, did not record a mission in the year of 2003 for the SA category. This is treated as an anomaly and therefore that

year will not be used to determine if USAREC achieved or did not achieve its SA recruitment objective. The mission for SAs is not always consistent, nor are the achievements in a given year. What is consistent is that the SA objective is rarely met.

As a caveat it is important to note that the Congress does not provide a mission to the Army for SAs. The target for this category is missioned by USAREC, so the failure to achieve the mission is internal to USAREC. When USAREC provides a soldier to the Army it is providing a graduate, whether that person signed a contract while a high school senior or after graduating high school or obtaining an equivalent credential. The above table also does not show the percentage of high school senior contracts written by the Army compared with the other branches of military service.

Comparatively, table 3 shows that the Army has consistently met its overall recruiting objectives since 2002 with the exception of 2005 when the mission was increased from 77,000 in 2004 to 80,000 in 2005, and the Army faced a difficult recruiting environment due to conditions in Iraq. While the mission has fluctuated, USAREC has responded by providing strength for the Army.

Mission accomplishment can still be achieved if the SA enlistment objective is not met. A grad alpha (GA) is a high school graduate that scored 50 or higher on the AFQT. A GA contract can be written in lieu of a SA contract. If a unit achieves GA contracts in excess of its assigned mission, these contracts can be substituted for contracts not achieved in other categories. This is subject to substitution rules provided by the

USAREC G3 each quarter.<sup>10</sup> When a company is assigned a mission for grad bravo (GB) contracts, high school graduates that score less than 50 on the AFQT, it can be logically argued that a GA contract would be preferable to the Army. GA and GB category contracts are both high school graduates, the difference between the two is that a GA scores 50 or higher on the AFQT on the ASVAB, and a GB scores lower than a 50.

In the case of SA contracts, the Army is still getting a qualified individual if a GA contract is written in its place. However when SA contracts are not written, it calls into question the effectiveness of a unit’s program to recruit graduating high school students.

Table 3. Regular Army Mission Accomplishment

Regular Army			
Year	Mission	Achieve	Gross
2002	73011	106639	146.06%
2003	73800	74132	100.45%
2004	77000	77587	100.76%
2005	80000	73373	91.72%
2006	80000	80635	100.79%
2007	80000	80410	100.51%
2008	80000	80517	100.65%
2009	65000	70045	107.76%
2010	74500	74577	100.10%
2011	64000	64019	100.03%

*Source:* Table created by author using data from Stephen L. Deane, Operations Chief, 5th Brigade, USAREC, e-mail to author, 25 April 2012; “U.S. Army Recruiting Command Goals,” *USAREC G7/9*, 19 December 2011, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/goals.htm> (accessed 25 April 2012).

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<sup>10</sup>US Army Recruiting Command Regulation 601-73, *Missioning Procedures* (Fort Knox, KY: August 19, 2008), [http://www.usarec.army.mil/im/formpub/REC\\_PUBS/R601\\_73.pdf](http://www.usarec.army.mil/im/formpub/REC_PUBS/R601_73.pdf) (accessed May16, 2012), 2.

The only way to determine if a student is a SA is through the ASVAB. When scores are released, the ASVAB results provide recruiters with a list of pre-qualified leads for SA contracts. While many schools offer the ASVAB, many schools do not, and in some cases schools are prohibited by local or state policies and/or laws from releasing ASVAB scores to recruiters.<sup>11</sup> If the test is not taken, or taken and the scores are not released, it makes the job of a recruiter more difficult to prospect for high school students that qualify to join the military. When a test is not taken in the high school, a recruiter can schedule an independent test for a prospective enlistee at the MEPS or a MET site. If the test was taken at the high school, but scores were not released, the prospective enlistee signs a record request so that the recruiter can receive the test results from MEPCOM.

In addition to USAREC not meeting its recruitment objectives for SA contracts and the job of military recruiters also being more difficult, high school students may also be missing out on opportunities available to them.

A recruiter does not entirely rely on the ASVAB to make logical deductions of where to find students that qualify based on aptitude for military service. Students that demonstrate high aptitude are likely to be enrolled in advanced placement courses, college preparatory courses, and other courses in high school. Military recruiters will focus their efforts in areas likely to generate a qualified enlistment.

If ASVAB scores are not released, students that qualify for military service may not be contacted by a recruiter, and this may have the effect of limiting opportunities available to students since they may not be aware of military opportunities. Additionally students that score high on the ASVAB may not find out that they qualify for a high tech

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<sup>11</sup>US Army Recruiting Command Manual 3-01, *Recruiter Handbook*, 6-5.

job if a recruiting professional is unable to counsel them about their opportunities. The limitation of opportunities for our youth may be the most significant consequence for not releasing ASVAB scores to military recruiters.

When schools administer the ASVAB the school has the option to select how scores are released. Table 4 shows the options that schools have to pick from when selecting how scores will be released to military recruiters.

Table 4. ASVAB CEP Release Options for Recruiter Contact

Release Option	Results to Recruiting Services
Option 1	7 days after test scores are mailed.
Option 2	60 days after test scores are mailed. No contact prior to that time
Option 3	90 days after test scores are mailed. No contact prior to that time
Option 4	120 days after test scores are mailed. No contact prior to that time
Option 5	End of school year. No contact prior to that time
Option 6	7 days after test scores are mailed. No telephone solicitations by recruiters
Option 7	Not valid for enlistment purposes. Results not released to Recruiting Services
Option 8	Not released to Recruiting Services

*Source:* ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011), 19.

There are a total of seven choices that a school can choose from. Although eight options are listed, only Option 1-6, or Option 8 are available for schools to select. Option 7 is not offered a valid choice for schools to select. Option 1 is most ideal for military recruiters because they receive the results one week after scores are mailed. Options 2-5 are further restrictive because scores are not released until after a specified time period. Option 6 allows for the scores to be released to military recruiters, however telephone

solicitations are not allowed to occur from the release of test results. The most restrictive option that schools can select is Option 8 which does not allow for the release of test scores to military recruiters. The option selected determines when or if recruiters will receive the ASVAB test results. A recruiter can still obtain a result from Option 8 if an applicant comes into a recruiting station and signs a request for MEPCOM data.

### Primary Research Question

Why do schools choose to not release ASVAB scores to military recruiters?

### Secondary Research Questions

To address the primary research question, the following secondary questions must be answered:

1. What is the purpose of the ASVAB?
2. What is the number of high schools that administer the ASVAB?
3. Of the schools that participate, how many schools choose to not release test scores?
4. What is the number of students that take the ASVAB and what percentage is that of the student population?
5. What are documented objections to the ASVAB from educators, parents, and students?
6. Are there federal laws that apply to the ASVAB?
7. Are there state and/or local laws that apply to the ASVAB?

### Assumptions

Studies will provide accurate data. Viewpoints that are subjective opinions of individuals found in articles can be aggregated to suggest general perceptions about the ASVAB. Career clusters are embraced by school districts and there is a desire to place students into career clusters. Schools want a way to help students with career placement.

### Limitations

This study is limited to how ASVAB scores are used by US Army recruiting personnel. Sister services help schedule and administer the ASVAB and the test provides results to all branches of the military. This study will focus the results with an application for the US Army.

There are multiple reasons that may motivate schools to deny ASVAB scores to recruiters. Correlating data may not necessarily imply cause and effect so this study may not produce direct cause and effect relationships.

### Delimitations

Published studies have a gap in school testing data that does not include results from 1968-1979. Testing data is available from 1980-1995 in published studies, however there is a gap in some data provided by MEPCOM from 1996-1999. Results that show schools selecting Option 8 for test result release is limited to MEPCOM data provided from 2000-2011.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will focus on topics of emphasis in four different areas in order to identify works that are relevant to the thesis research question. These four categories are (1) Career Exploration, (2) Perceptions and Opinion, (3) Legal and Political, and (4) Informative. This review encompasses primary sources, secondary sources, and tertiary sources for information.

The review of research has identified a gap that this thesis seeks to address. Scholarly works have addressed the validity of the ASVAB in career exploration and research data exists that indicates how many schools release ASVAB scores. Complaints and concerns about the ASVAB are represented in articles in newspapers and periodicals. School districts and states have passed policies and or laws that either restrict the release of scores or do not allow the test to be taken at all. Currently there are no scholarly works that address the question as to why schools are not releasing ASVAB scores and why polices and or laws are being passed to ensure that schools do not release scores. A review of the four areas addressed above will identify what type of information is available in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions.

#### Career Exploration

Primary and secondary sources are used to validate the ASVAB's use and effectiveness in career exploration. Many of these sources are academic in nature and are thoroughly studied and researched.



Janet Wall in her article, “An Example of Assessment’s Role in Career Exploration” identifies how the ASVAB is used in career exploration and links the test to careers.<sup>12</sup> When the validity of the ASVAB was brought into question as a civilian career exploration tool, Terry P. Armstrong et al wrote the “Armed Services Vocational Battery: Validation for Civilian Occupations.”<sup>13</sup> This study demonstrates a correlation to civilian occupations. It is important to note that this study was conducted before the 1992 revision of the ASVAB that incorporated the CEP. Since the adaptation of career clusters in Career and Technical Education (CTE), a venture funded by the states and the federal government, the ASVAB CEP published a brochure linking civilian careers in the sixteen career clusters with military careers. Jeff Rogers in the article, “Review of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program,” states that there is a lack of research that the test applies to civilian careers.<sup>14</sup>

Janice Laurence et al, in *Military Psychology*, wrote the article, “Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program” which looks at the number schools and students that participate in the ASVAB over a multi-year period.<sup>15</sup>

Harley Baker in the article, “Reducing adolescent career indecision: The ASVAB Career Exploration Program” found that the ASVAB reduces career indecision among

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<sup>12</sup>Wall, “An Example of Assessment’s Role in Career Exploration,” 608-613.

<sup>13</sup>Armstrong, Chalupsky, Dalldorf, and McLaughlin, “Armed Services Vocational Battery: Validation for Civilian Occupations,” 1-109.

<sup>14</sup>Jeff E. Rogers, “Review of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program,” *Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling and Development* 29, no. 3 (October 1996).

<sup>15</sup>Barnes, Dela Rosa, Laurence, and Wall, “Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program,” 225-238.

students and helps broaden opportunities that students may find of interest.<sup>16</sup> This body of research demonstrates that the ASVAB CEP can be used for career exploration, it correlates with the 16 career clusters, and it can help narrow the focus of students.

### Perception and Opinion

This section of research primarily focuses on newspaper articles or opinion pieces that identify concerns shared by parents, students, and special interest groups about the ASVAB. One highly debated point involves the decision of whether or not to release the scores of the ASVAB to military recruiters and what level of parental involvement should take place in regards to this decision. These sources are primarily tertiary in nature and are cited to represent the array of perceptions and opinions that have been documented.

Joseph Monte and Edward Johnson in the *American Teacher* journal article, “Should students get parent consent for armed services tests?” both offer differing views. Monte a guidance counselor that has helped facilitate ASVAB tests in high schools since the test’s inception in 1968, feels that parents should be part of the important decision of exploring military options. Johnson, a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructor, sees no difference in the ASVAB as compared to tests mandated by the schools where parental consent is not required.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Harley E. Baker, “Reducing Adolescent Career Indecision: The ASVAB Career Exploration Program,” *The Career Development Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (June 1, 2002): 359-370, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>17</sup>E. Johnson, and J. Monte, “Should Students Get Parent Consent For Armed Services Tests?” *American Teacher* (October 1, 2010), <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011), 3.

While Monte and Johnson differ on the issue of parental consent, other articles go even further to question the purpose of the test. Melissa Milios in the *Daily Breeze* article, “Test could help students be all they can be,” presents a wide range of views concerning the scheduled ASVAB test at San Pedro High School in Torrance, California. She quotes, Chris Venn of San Pedro Neighbors for Peace and Justice as saying, “Are they really interested in providing schools with aptitude tests, or is their sole interest in meeting their quotas?”<sup>18</sup> Similarly Lindsay Kastner in the *Antonio Express-News* article, “Military test in high schools has some folks wary,” expresses comments from individuals concerned about what the ASVAB really is and addresses concerns from parents about the scores being released to recruiters.<sup>19</sup>

Carnell Hawthorne’s article, “Military Test Provokes Ire of Some Parents,”<sup>20</sup> states that administrators at Suwannee High School required all juniors to take the ASVAB. Parents voiced concerns because the only option they had to exempt their student from the test was to keep them out of school for the day. The article presents viewpoints from administrators and parents.

Melissa Wilson and Shannon Shoener in the article, “Uncle Sam Wants . . . No Begs You to Join,” presents the argument that recruiters need the release of ASVAB

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<sup>18</sup>Melissa Milios, “Test Could Help Students Be All They Can Be,” *Daily Breeze*, December 8, 2004, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>19</sup>Lindsay Kastner, “Military Test in High Schools Has Some Folks Wary,” *San Antonio Express-News*, November 27, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>20</sup>Carnell Hawthorne Jr., “Military Test Provokes Ire of Some Parents,” *Suwannee Democrat*, December 1, 2009, <http://suwanneedemocrat.com/local/x546375570/Military-test-provokes-ire-of-some-parents> (accessed January 31, 2012).

scores due to the military's increase in educational standards causing a reduction in the number of enlistments. So in addition to parental concern of scores being released, the authors also present the opinion that youth are too young to join the military. The authors present the counter point of Matt Frutchy who states, "I think if teenagers aren't joining the military, then who is? It's not like it's a retirement option or something. It's a career."<sup>21</sup>

While many of the opinion pieces present both sides, some of the opinions are one sided, such as the article written by Adriana Cortes in the *Objector* titled, "A Student's Tale of ASVAB Resistance." Believing that the ASVAB is just for recruitment and that students are easy prey, she rebelled by not using her real name on test materials, and was eventually asked to leave. Compounding her argument were some unprofessional actions by recruiters, where she states that one recruiter told her that she was being un-American by not cooperating.<sup>22</sup>

A news article from 760 KFMB AM talk radio in San Diego, California presented a story that cited support from students, parents, and administrators in support of a policy to restrict military recruiting.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Shannon Shoener Southern and Melissa Wilson, "Uncle Sam Wants . . . No, Begs You to Join," *Maryland Gazette*, November 30, 2005, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>22</sup>Adriana Cortes, "A Student's Tale of ASVAB Resistance," *Objector* (July 1, 2005), <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011), 14.

<sup>23</sup>"San Diego Schools Restrict Military Recruiters." *760 KFMB AM Talk Radio*, December 1, 2010, <http://www.760kfmb.com/Global/story.asp?S=13596911> (accessed January 31, 2012).

Sam Diener of *Peacework* wrote the article, “Military Recruiting Test Ensnarers Over 600,000 Students a Year.” He describes the ASVAB as a “Trojan horse.” He would prefer that the test not be administered at all, but if it is to be administered he recommends that schools select the option to not release test scores to military recruiters.<sup>24</sup>

The Topanga Peace Alliance published on their website the *Topanga Messenger* a story about their efforts in distributing military opt-out forms to local high schools. This article also sheds light that the government also collects information on students through Joint Advertising Market Research Studies.<sup>25</sup>

### Legal and Political

This section uses primary sources such as federal laws, state laws, and written policies used by school districts. Included in primary sources are documents used by special interest groups that state policy positions. Articles that report developments in these laws or policies are tertiary in nature.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a federal law that contains language allowing for the release of student directory information to military recruiters.<sup>26</sup> The Family Educational Rights and Protection Act (FERPA) is a law that limits the release of

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<sup>24</sup>Sam Diener, “Military Recruiting Test Ensnarers Over 600,000 Students a Year,” *Peacework*, February 1, 2007, 24, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>25</sup>Julie Levine, “TPA High School Military “Opt-Out” Drive,” *Topanga Messenger*, November 17, 2011, [http://www.topangamessenger.com/story\\_detail.php?ArticleID=4825](http://www.topangamessenger.com/story_detail.php?ArticleID=4825) (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>26</sup>*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Public Law 107–110 (January 8, 2002), <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2012).

student records.<sup>27</sup> Information about both of these laws are available on the Department of Education website.

The State of California has California Education Code that is similar to the federal FERPA legislation. While NCLB and FERPA withhold funds if the law is not followed in the states, the California law establishes code that is law that must be followed in the state.<sup>28</sup> While the right to privacy is not as well defined at the federal level according to *Justia* regarding Constitutional Law,<sup>29</sup> California's courts have defined a right to privacy in the state as indicated in *Porten v. University of San Francisco*.<sup>30</sup>

The decision of whether or not to release ASVAB test scores is being vetted through the political process. The article "Board Puts Off Decision On Military Test For Students," by Dakarai Aarons is about the Memphis Board of Education's delaying the decision of whether or not to release test scores.<sup>31</sup> While Memphis tabled the issue, the state of Maryland has already passed into law that high schools in the state can no longer

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<sup>27</sup>"Family Educational Rights and Protection Act," US Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> (accessed March 29, 2012).

<sup>28</sup>California Education Code 49069 - 49062, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=edc&group=49001-50000&file=49069-49072> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>29</sup>Constitutional Law: Privacy Rights and Personal Autonomy, *Justia* <http://www.justia.com/constitutional-law/docs/privacy-rights.html> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>30</sup>*Porten v. University of San Francisco* 64 Cal. App. 3d 825, *Justia*, December 14, 1976, <http://law.justia.com/cases/california/calapp3d/64/825.html> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>31</sup>Dakarai I. Aarons, "Board Puts Off Decision On Military Test For Students," Final Edition, *The Commercial Appeal*, February 6, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

select the option for ASVAB scores to be released to recruiters, as reported by Michael Birnbaum in the Washington Post article, “Maryland Law Limits Military Recruitment of Students: High Schools Can No Longer Forward Scores On Vocational Test.”<sup>32</sup> A *USA Today* article points out that Maryland was the first state in the nation to pass a law prohibiting the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters.<sup>33</sup> An *NPR* article by Claudio Sanchez provides some information on the opinion of Sheila Hixson the leader of the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee that pushed through the Maryland legislation.<sup>34</sup>

A couple of states have introduced legislation that would restrict the the release of scores to military recruiters. State of California Assembly Bill 2994<sup>35</sup> was vetoed by Governor Arnold Swarzenegger, however Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley passed

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<sup>32</sup>Michael Birnbaum, “Maryland Law Limits Military Recruitment of Students; High Schools Can No Longer Forward Scores On Vocational Test,” *The Washington Post*, April 15, 2010, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>33</sup>“Maryland 1st to Bar Schools Releasing Tests To Military,” *USA Today*, May 13, 2010, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-05-13-military-testing\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-05-13-military-testing_N.htm) (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>34</sup>Claudio Sanchez, “Looping Parents In On Armed Services Test,” *NPR*, July 30, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128777298> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>35</sup>California Legislature 2007-08 Regular Session Assembly Bill No. 2994, February 22, 2008, [http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab\\_2951-3000/ab\\_2994\\_bill\\_20080222\\_introduced.pdf](http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_2951-3000/ab_2994_bill_20080222_introduced.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

House Bill 176.<sup>36</sup> These are sources of legislative language that has been written to restrict the release of scores.

DMZ Hawaii<sup>37</sup> is a tertiary source written in a blog format. This website announces the Hawaii Department of Education decision that requires all Hawaii public schools to select Option 8. Hawaii's policy is also recognized in Margaret Barczak's article "ASVAB Test Results May Now Be Withheld From Recruiters" that highlights Maryland's law.<sup>38</sup>

The Mountlake Terrace High School website captures the Edmonds School District No. 15 policy of announcing that the ASVAB test is voluntary and states that information released generally cannot be used for recruiting purposes.<sup>39</sup> In the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools district in North Carolina, scores cannot be released to military recruiters if the test is taken during school hours.<sup>40</sup> The New York City Department of

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<sup>36</sup>Maryland General Assembly. House. *Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters* (April 13, 2010): House Bill 176, [http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/chapters\\_noln/Ch\\_105\\_hb0176T.pdf](http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/chapters_noln/Ch_105_hb0176T.pdf) (accessed May 17, 2012).

<sup>37</sup>Kyle Kajihiro, "New Policy Will Shield Students From Some Unwanted Military Recruiter Contact." *DMZ Hawaii*, August 9, 2009, <http://www.dmzhawaii.org/?p=3121> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>38</sup>Margaret Barczak, "ASVAB Test Results May Now Be Withheld From Recruiters," *Examiner*, May 15, 2010, <http://www.examiner.com/military-headlines-in-tampa-bay/asvab-test-results-may-now-be-withheld-from-recruiters> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>39</sup>"Edmonds School District No. 15 Career Recruiting Guidelines," Mountlake Terrace High School, October 6, 2011, <http://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/1988201021808180/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=57500> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>40</sup>Jimmy Chancey and Karen Isenberg to High School Principals, September 11, 2007, Memorandum on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), e-mail



Education policy<sup>41</sup> and the San Diego City Schools policy<sup>42</sup> both explicitly state that Option 8 must be selected when the ASVAB is administered. These policies differ from the Oakland, California policy<sup>43</sup> that specifically prohibits the administration of the ASVAB or an equivalent in the district.

Nationally recognized special interest groups have promoted press releases and provided testimony for laws that restrict the release of ASVAB scores. The ACLU of Ohio published a press release on the Toledo, Ohio school policy that does not allow Toledo public schools to administer the ASVAB.<sup>44</sup> The ACLU of Maryland provided testimony supporting Maryland SB 778<sup>45</sup> and likewise the National Association for the

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to author from CPT Timothy Page, Commander US Army Recruiting Company Charlotte April 17, 2012.

<sup>41</sup>“No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Disclosure of Information to Institutions of Higher Learning and the Military,” NYC Department of Education, June 23, 2009, [http://www.projectyano.org/educationnotarms/recruitingpolicy/SDUSD\\_recruiter\\_access\\_policy\\_and\\_SUMMARY\\_approved11-30-10.pdf](http://www.projectyano.org/educationnotarms/recruitingpolicy/SDUSD_recruiter_access_policy_and_SUMMARY_approved11-30-10.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>42</sup>“Policy on Recruiting Activities in San Diego City Schools,” [http://www.projectyano.org/educationnotarms/recruitingpolicy/SDUSD\\_recruiter\\_access\\_policy\\_and\\_SUMMARY\\_approved11-30-10.pdf](http://www.projectyano.org/educationnotarms/recruitingpolicy/SDUSD_recruiter_access_policy_and_SUMMARY_approved11-30-10.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>43</sup>“BP 5125.1.” Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, <http://publicportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/199410924185124407/site/default.asp?> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>44</sup>“New Toledo Public Schools Policy Protects Student Privacy, Parents’ Rights,” American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio, August 21, 2009, <http://www.acluohio.org/pressreleases/2009pr/2009.08.21.asp> (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>45</sup>“Testimony for the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee: SB 778- Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters,” American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, March 17, 2010, [http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/ACLU\\_MD\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/ACLU_MD_Testimony.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Maryland State Conference supported Maryland HB 176<sup>46</sup> prohibiting the release of ASVAB scores to recruiters.

While some cities, counties, and states are limiting the release of scores to recruiters, the Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin proclaimed October 2007 as ASVAB Career Exploration Month in the State of Alaska.<sup>47</sup> The proclamation promotes the partnership between the DoD and the schools, and encourages educators to use the test to determine the career aptitude of students. The proclamation while promoting a positive message for the ASVAB does not address the release of scores.

The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter wrote a legal brief that argues that when the LA school district releases scores, it violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California statutes.<sup>48</sup> This brief researches applicable laws, legal precedents, and addresses the release of students records as a matter of student privacy and who has the legal authority to release private student data. This document is unique in that it interprets the law as applied in the State of California as compared with ASVAB CEP interpretation of when the scores become part of the student record.

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<sup>46</sup>“Support: HB 176 (Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters.” NAACP Maryland State Conference, March 3, 2010, [http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/NAACP\\_Md\\_Support\\_HB\\_176\\_testimony.pdf](http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/NAACP_Md_Support_HB_176_testimony.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

<sup>47</sup>“Governor Palin Proclaims October 2007 As ASVAB Career Exploration Month,” *US Fed News Service*, September 19, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

<sup>48</sup>The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter, The Los Angeles Unified School Districts’s Current Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California Statutes, [http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/ASVAB\\_Memo\\_NLG-Los\\_Angeles.pdf](http://www.asvabtest.org/pdf/ASVAB_Memo_NLG-Los_Angeles.pdf) (accessed January 31, 2012).

## Informative

Research data exists on the profile of students that take the ASVAB along with the number of schools and the number of students that take the ASVAB. This primary data is collected by MEPCOM. This thesis also looks at the relation that the ASVAB has towards career clusters. Each state has their own procedures for implementing career clusters and that information is available from career and technical education websites.

The ASVAB CEP website provides the ASVAB CEP Fact Sheet and Overview of the ASVAB CEP. These documents provide information on the profile of students that take the ASVAB and provide information for the purpose of the ASVAB. How Army recruiters use the ASVAB is described in USAREC Manual 3-01, *Recruiter Handbook*.<sup>49</sup>

The ASVAB CEP Analysis and Strategy report for SY 11-12<sup>50</sup> provides data directly from MEPCOM on numbers of students that take the test, number of schools that participate, and how many schools select Option 8 testing. The report analyzes historical data and addresses a strategy on how the ASVAB can continue program success.

USAREC Regulation 601-73, *Missioning Procedures*, provides information about how USAREC is missioned. Additionally it provides information on how substitutions by category can be made.<sup>51</sup> USAREC maintains data in the Recruiting Management Zone database that contains information about the annual mission for enlistees and the database also tracks how many Soldiers enlisted by category, i.e. GA, SA. Mr. Stephen Deane

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<sup>49</sup>US Army Recruiting Command Manual 3-01, *Recruiter Handbook*

<sup>50</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011).

<sup>51</sup>US Army Recruiting Command Regulation 601-73, *Missioning Procedures*.

conducted a database query providing information about mission accomplishment for the GA and SA mission categories.<sup>52</sup> Information about overall fiscal year mission accomplishment for Army enlistments is also available on the USAREC G7/9 website.<sup>53</sup>

Research presented by the Heritage Foundation identifies statistics on who joins the military. It provides information on how many minorities join the military, family income levels that enlistees come from, and the proportion of enlistees that come from each state.<sup>54</sup> This information provides facts to compare with common perceptions of enlistees coming into the military.

USAREC provides information about the importance of the ASVAB to recruiters in USAREC Pamphlet 350-13. An Education Services Specialist answers some questions about the ASVAB in the article from *Techniques* titled “A Closer Look at the ASVAB CEP Program.”

As the ASVAB went through a revision in 1992, the federal government and states have developed the sixteen career clusters. Information on the implementation of the career clusters can be found in Susan Reese’s article, “Career Clusters:

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<sup>52</sup>Stephen L. Deane, Operations Chief, 5th Brigade, USAREC, e-mail to author, April 25, 2012.

<sup>53</sup>“U.S. Army Recruiting Command Goals,” *USAREC G7/9*, December 19, 2011, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/goals.htm> (accessed April 25, 2012).

<sup>54</sup>James Sherk, Shanea J. Watkins, “Who Serves in the US Military?: Demographic Characteristics of Enlisted Troops and Officers,” The Heritage Foundation (August 21, 2008): Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Book of Readings*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, August 2011.

Implementation in the States” from *Techniques* journal.<sup>55</sup> Information about how states have begun to implement career clusters is available from “Meade Tried Career Clusters,” in the *Maryland Gazette*, the Missouri Career Clusters Booklet, and the Kansas CTE website.

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<sup>55</sup>S. Reese, “Career Clusters: Implementation in the States,” *Techniques*, September 1, 2008, 16-21, <http://www.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/> (accessed September 24, 2011).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The primary research question asks why schools do not release ASVAB scores to military recruiters. This chapter demonstrates how the study was conducted and how information was obtained to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The last chapter was a literature review of available sources that relate to the primary and secondary research questions. This chapter explains how these information sources were used to answer the research questions.

This is a descriptive study that paints a picture in a logical sequence of why schools are not releasing ASVAB scores to military recruiters. With each of the secondary research questions, this chapter identifies where the information is located and how that information was collected to answer the research questions.

#### What is the purpose of the ASVAB?

Information about the purpose of the ASVAB was found in recruiting manuals, and in fact sheets, and pamphlets posted on the ASVAB CEP website. This information was collected by reviewing these documents. A database search from Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) also provided information.

#### What are the number of high schools that administer the ASVAB?

This data is aggregated from a MEPCOM database and reported in a chart in the ASVAB CEP *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* report. Information from earlier years was also available in a report that studied the recruiting effectiveness of the ASVAB. By reviewing this data and providing it in a table, the number of high schools that administer

the ASVAB was accurately reported. These sources were obtained from a CARL database search and from MEPCOM.

Of the schools that participate, how many schools choose to not release test scores?

This research question is not directly answered by literature reviewed on the ASVAB. The ASVAB CEP *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* report identifies the number of tests that were scored using Option 8 where scores were not released, however it does not specify the number of schools where Option 8 was selected. This information was provided by MEPCOM.

How many students take the ASVAB, and what percentage of the student population take the ASVAB?

Information to answer this research question is found a study on the recruiting effectiveness of the ASVAB and also in the ASVAB CEP *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* report. The information was collected by reviewing the tables in these reports. This provided a historical background for how many students have taken the ASVAB in the past. This information was located using CARL database search and from MEPCOM.

What are documented objections to the ASVAB from educators, parents, and students?

Information that addresses this research question is primarily found in professional journals, in professional journals, and mostly in newspaper articles reporting on the ASVAB. This information is subjective in nature. A wide collection of information was required to get enough information to sample the spectrum of opinion. By reviewing many articles, themes started to emerge that were common to many of the

articles. These sources were found using a CARL database search and from information aggregated by the National Coalition for Student Privacy website.

Are there federal laws that apply to the ASVAB?

To address this research question the applicable provisions of FERPA and NCLB were reviewed from the Department of Education website. Information that supported the interpretation of the law in support the ASVAB came from the *ASVAB CEP Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* report. The interpretation that did not support the release of scores came from a legal brief written by the National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter. Information was provided by the Department of Education website, MEPCOM, and the National Coalition for Student Privacy website.

Are there state and/or local laws that apply to the ASVAB?

Information to address this research question came from newspaper articles reporting on proposals, policies, and laws passed. It was also derived from the language of drafted legislation, and legislation that was actually enacted into law. Announcements and support for these policies and laws were also provided by advocacy organizations. This information was found by a CARL database search, and also from the National Coalition for Student Privacy website.

Summary

The methodology used in the conduct of research seeks to answer the primary research question of why schools do not release ASVAB scores by answering the secondary research questions. These questions are answered in a descriptive manner. This



chapter explained how the information was collected. The next chapter will provide analysis of facts and data found throughout the conduct of this research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Number of schools and students that participate in the ASVAB

In order to understand how many schools and student participate in the ASVAB, it is important to capture historical numbers to identify trends with the ASVAB. Since the inception of the ASVAB the number of schools and the number of students that participate has varied. Citing research from 1994, the test is used by approximately 900,000 students and 14,000 schools.<sup>56</sup> At that time there were 21,500 high schools in the United States, with 65.1 percent of high schools participating in ASVAB testing. Table 5 shows from 1980-1995 the percentage of participating schools, the total number of US students, and the percentage of students participating in the ASVAB. Even though the overall numbers fluctuate, it can be seen from 1980-1995 that while the number of high school increased, the percentange of schools participating in the ASVAB declined along with the percentage of high school students taking the ASVAB.

Table 6 shows from 2000-2011 the number of schools and the percentage of schools that participated in the ASVAB. Compared with the chart from 1980-1995 the number of schools participating has demonstrated growth in total number of schools from a low of 18,378 schools in 1982-1983 to a high of 22,642 schools tested in 2010. Conversely looking at school years 1984-1985 a high of 79 percent of schools participated in the ASVAB compared to a low of 54.1 percent school participation in the year 2010. This is significant because as the number of high schools in the US has grown

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<sup>56</sup>Barnes, Dela Rosa, Laurence, and Wall, "Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program," 226.

the adoption rate of the ASVAB has not kept pace, despite the fact that more schools offer the ASVAB now than in the past.

Table 5. ASVAB CEP School and Student Participation Rates  
 ASVAB Career Exploration Program School and Student Participation Rates  
 (Biennial School Years 1980–1995)

School Year	Total Schools	% Participating Schools	Total Students <sup>a</sup>		% Participants	
			Grades 11 and 12	Grades 10, 11, and 12	Grades 11 and 12	Grades 10, 11, and 12
1980–1981	19,910	68.02	8,764,349	—	8.15	—
1982–1983	18,378	78.66	6,301,275	—	12.60	—
1984–1985	18,396	79.03	5,901,560	—	13.15	—
1986–1987	21,657	71.69	6,048,109	9,336,810	14.92	12.01
1988–1989	21,821	72.17	6,127,099	9,178,940	13.92	11.33
1990–1991	21,480	70.14	5,696,840	8,807,102	13.57	10.55
1992–1993	21,463	64.04	5,603,626	8,757,743	13.24	9.96
1994–1995	21,517	61.98	5,724,572	8,973,163	13.15	9.75

*Note.* ASVAB = Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

<sup>a</sup>Tenth graders were tested beginning in school year 1985–1986. Prior to 1993, the Air Force set annual goals concerning the number of students to be tested, thus potentially inflating participation relative to later years.

*Source:* Jeffrey D. Barnes, Michelle Dela Rosa, Janice H. Laurence, and Janet E. Wall, “Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program,” *Military Psychology* 10, no. 4 (December 1998): 229.

The number of students taking the test is also significant. Table 7 shows the total number of students that took the ASVAB from 1990-2011. What is significant is that in 1990, 1,006,957 students took the test compared to 2011 when only 670,561 students participated in the ASVAB. In the same period there were a total of 9,336,614 high schools students in 1990 and in 2011 there were 11,722,193. As the number of high school students increased the actual percentage of high school students participating declined from 10.8 percent in 1990 to 5.7 percent in 2011.

Table 6. Schools Tested 2000-2011

Total Students Tested			
	Number of High Schools in US	Total Number of High Schools that Administer ASVAB	Percentage of High Schools that Administer ASVAB
2000	21,934	13,032	59.4%
2001	21,989	12,790	58.2%
2002	22,157	12,692	57.3%
2003	22,249	12,612	56.7%
2004	22,174	12,598	56.8%
2005	21,777	12,381	56.9%
2006	21,693	12,151	56.0%
2007	21,688	12,080	55.7%
2008	22,148	12,168	54.9%
2009	22,075	12,144	55.0%
2010	22,642	12,251	54.1%
2011	22,604	12,462	55.1%

*Source:* Created by author using data from ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011), 21.

With over 22,000 high schools and over 670,000 students participating in the ASVAB those are still significant numbers. This access to schools and to the students helps military recruiters develop relationships with school administrators, teachers, and students.

Schools that do not release scores

The number of high school students taking the ASVAB and the percentage of schools that participate in the ASVAB has declined. In addition, the number of student tests where Option 8 (do not release) was selected has more than tripled from 2004-2011. Table 8 shows the number of tests where Option 8 was selected from 2000-2011.

Table 7. Total Students Tested

Total Students Tested			
	Total Population	Total Students	Total Percentage
1990	9,336,314	1,006,957	10.8%
1991	8,993,197	931,183	10.4%
1992	8,875,136	882,426	9.9%
1993	8,986,417	870,429	9.7%
1994	9,087,714	872,303	9.6%
1995	9,201,111	876,857	9.5%
1996	9,276,215	879,530	9.5%
1997	9,467,235	898,878	9.5%
1998	9,642,834	894,875	9.3%
1999	9,747,143	857,631	8.8%
2000	9,754,133	826,957	8.5%
2001	9,770,854	792,406	8.1%
2002	9,918,698	779,597	7.9%
2003	9,997,543	756,653	7.6%
2004	10,122,605	722,449	7.1%
2005	10,169,958	687,999	6.8%
2006	10,215,883	646,264	6.3%
2007	10,259,786	631,222	6.2%
2008	10,395,855	641,194	6.2%
2009	10,564,542	643,142	6.1%
2010	10,818,983	659,929	6.1%
2011	11,722,193	670,561	5.7%

Source: Created by author using data from ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011), 22.

An overwhelming majority of scores are still released to recruiters with over 86 percent of scores being released in 2011. From 2000-2004 the number of test scores released to military recruiters actually increased. 2005 showed a negligible increase. From 2006 to 2011 the number of scores released to military recruiters steadily decreased. It remains to be seen whether or not this trend will continue. If the trend continues, as it has over the last five years, it could have an impact on the return on investment for DoD as a pre-qualified lead generation source for military recruiters. If school districts are increasingly not releasing ASVAB scores it is important to study the documented reasons as to why this may be the case.

Table 8. Option 8 Testing

Option 8 Testing			
	Number of Tests Scored Using Option 8	Number of ASVAB CEP Tests Scored	Percentage of Tests Scored Using Option 8
2000	48,969	826,957	5.92%
2001	41,783	792,406	5.27%
2002	38,465	779,597	4.93%
2003	34,775	756,653	4.60%
2004	27,437	722,449	3.80%
2005	26,192	687,999	3.81%
2006	26,688	646,264	4.13%
2007	29,513	631,222	4.68%
2008	42,736	641,194	6.67%
2009	54,459	643,142	8.47%
2010	79,330	659,929	12.02%
2011	93,295	670,562	13.91%

Source: Created by author using data from ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* (North Chicago: ASVAB CEP, 2011), 27.

### Documented objections to the ASVAB

There are documented reasons for and against the ASVAB. Reasons include deception, recruiting practices, student privacy, parental consent, and ethical considerations. Research has not produced articles with headlines promoting the release of ASVAB scores, however many articles take a balanced approach and offer an alternate viewpoint.

In the journal *American Teacher*, the question was posed, “Should students get parent consent for armed service tests?”<sup>57</sup> Joseph Monte, president of the Montgomery

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<sup>57</sup>Johnson and Monte, “Should Students Get Parent Consent For Armed Services Tests?,” 3.

County, Maryland Federation of Teachers argues yes. “The purpose of the ASVAB is to determine qualifications for enlistment in the U.S. armed forces. Considering that ASVAB is a pre-entrance test to the military, parents have a right to know and give their approval.”<sup>58</sup> Monte is a staunch supporter of the ASVAB and claims that no other test comes near it in terms of ability to provide career information for students. Monte has administered the test since its inception in 1968 and believes that it is in the best interest of the student if parents are involved with the entire “postsecondary process.”

Presenting the other side of the question is Edward Johnson a 16 year JROTC instructor in Houston, Texas. He is for parental involvement in education, but when asked about the ASVAB, Johnson states, “Why put students taking the ASVAB under a different standard than those taking, say, the Stanford Test, or the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills—exams that don’t require parental permission?”<sup>59</sup> He states that if there are concerns about contact from a military recruiter, that there is an option where students can select that they do not want to be contacted. He observes that only about 10 out of 300 students that take the test from his school join the military, but he sees former students come back later after dropping out of college or desiring to move on from dead end jobs inquire about their ASVAB scores hoping to start a productive career. Since the test does not incur any obligation of service from the test taker, Johnson does not see why parents should need to give permission.

Although the subject of the release of scores is not specifically mentioned by Monte and Johnson the opinions presented are important. Monte demonstrates that it is

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

possible to be a supporter of the ASVAB, yet be willing to argue for restrictions to be placed on the test. In this case it has to do with parental notification.

Schools may also not embrace the ASVAB because of a skepticism that the career information may be valid for military occupations but that there is a lack of information linking the ASVAB to civilian occupations. Terry Armstrong et al completed the study “ASVAB: Validation for Civilian Occupations” and states:

Despite its potential as an effective tool for career guidance and counseling for civilian occupations, many schools have adopted an arms-length attitude toward use of the battery. One strong reason for this is that the available validity information is primarily related to those forms of the battery reserved for use by the military and to criteria specific to military occupations.<sup>60</sup>

The Armstrong et al study was published in 1988 prior to the addition of the CEP in 1992. The CEP is the component of the ASVAB that provides a student with a code to identify careers that they show aptitude in. What is important is that schools may be asking if the ASVAB accomplishes what it purports to do and if the results are equally valid based on gender and ethnic backgrounds.

While schools may have concerns about the ASVAB, some students are wary of the test as well. Adriana Cortes was a high school junior when one day it was announced that her entire class was taking the ASVAB. Cortes provided a false name and address information and was asked to leave the testing area by recruiters. She states, “When we understand the military is trying to exploit our families, friends, neighbors, and classmates we can see and begin to fight back with curious and informed minds.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Armstrong, Chalupsk, Dalldorf, and McLaughlin, “Armed Services Vocational Battery: Validation for Civilian Occupations,” 1.

<sup>61</sup>Cortes, “A Student's Tale of ASVAB Resistance,” 14.



Cortes believes that adults are trying to “trick” students into joining the military. She also states that the military has increased recruitment activity in “working class, poor, and middle class schools.”<sup>62</sup> By her definition it would appear that the only group excluded from her list are students from upper class schools.

Parental concerns and objections are important to recruiters because even though a school administration may be supportive of the ASVAB, concerns brought up by parents could affect school policy in future years. Parents are also an important stakeholder to inform about the benefits of the ASVAB.

An article by Carnell Hawthorne Jr. in the *Suwannee Democrat*, states that all juniors at Suwannee High School were required to take the ASVAB. The school selects a test release option where scores are released to recruiters. According to Jim Simpson the assistant principal, the test is used “to determine job and career paths they’ll be suited for.”<sup>63</sup> One parent, Donna Odom does not like how the test is administered. She feels that students should be given an option to not take the test. The alternative given by the school is to miss a day of school, which Odom feels would hurt the school under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, “which penalizes schools for absenteeism.”<sup>64</sup> Odom states that her son is not interested in joining the military and feels that the ASVAB gives recruiters too much personal information. Hawthorne states that others have argued “that the ASVAB is not required by the Florida Department of Education, and therefore should

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Hawthorne, “Military Test Provokes Ire of Some Parents.”

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

not be forced upon students.”<sup>65</sup> While the school administration is supportive of the ASVAB there are some parents that are not quite as supportive.

Another parent Jay Hollenbeck from San Antonio, Texas, has the opinion that parents should be informed if taking a test could result in a visit from a military recruiter.<sup>66</sup> “Parents should be fully informed about the ASVAB and included in any decision to share results with the military.”<sup>67</sup> Contact from a military recruiter does not obligate a student to military service, and even though a 17 year old can sign a contract to join the military, it requires parental consent.

In addition to parents there are also advocacy groups that object to the ASVAB. Sam Diener in the article, “Military Recruiting Test Ensnares Over 600,000 Students a Year” in *Peacework* magazine says that the ASVAB claims to provide career information to students, yet “In reality the ASVAB is a Trojan Horse, as it includes the entire content of the Armed Forces Qualifying Test.”<sup>68</sup> Diener says that activists can advocate to get schools to drop the test, tell students that the test is not mandatory, or convince schools to select Option 8.<sup>69</sup> He cites Arlene Inouye of the Coalition Against Militarism in Our Schools where she claims that two schools selected Option 8 out of the thirty-nine that tested in the Unified School District of Los Angeles in 2005-2006 due to activism.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Kastner, “Military Test in High Schools Has Some Folks Wary.”

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Diener, “Military Recruiting Test Ensnares Over 600,000 Students a Year,” 24.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

Advocacy groups are active throughout the country. The Topanga Peace Alliance distributed military opt out forms to seven high schools. Additionally the Topanga Peace Alliance is working to get opt out forms for the Joint Advertising Market Research Studies database, a DoD database on American youth.<sup>71</sup> The American Friends Service Committee has a section on their website that opposes ASVAB testing.<sup>72</sup>

What is significant about Diener's observations is that some advocacy groups perceive the marketing of the ASVAB to be misleading. He is correct that the ASVAB given to high school students contains the AFQT. If scores are released to military recruiters and a student receives a qualifying score, it is likely the student will be contacted by a military recruiter. The test results also include the CEP so students actually receive information about both military and civilian careers.

The ethical question of releasing scores to the military is not limited to advocacy groups. In the professional journal, *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling & Development*, Jeff Rogers discusses the responsibility of schools to select an option to release test scores to the military.

This is perhaps the element of the ASVAB program most subject to criticism, in that schools are allowed to make a decision to release test information to military recruiters who then use testing lists and results to contact students. This seems to ignore any element of parental consent, places a burden of decision on school officials, and subjects students to perhaps unwanted solicitation by military recruiters.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Levine, "TPA High School Military "Opt-Out" Drive."

<sup>72</sup>Kastner, "Military Test in High Schools Has Some Folks Wary."

<sup>73</sup>Rogers, "Review of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program," 176.

Rogers recognizes that in an all volunteer military, recruiters rely on advertising and personal contact with students to promote the military.<sup>74</sup> Since the ASVAB can determine if students qualify for the military, and the administration of the test and interpretation of the results can involve military recruiters, Rogers states that the ASVAB with the release of scores is not at odds with recruitment activities. He says that this is an ethical question that should be explored by “school officials, researchers, and military officials.”<sup>75</sup>

Opinions vary on reasons why or why not ASVAB scores should be released to military recruiters. Viewpoints explored include perceptions of deception, recruiting practices, student privacy, parental consent, and ethical considerations.

### Legal and Political

#### Federal Laws

At the federal level there are two laws that help to provide context in regards to student privacy and the ASVAB. These two laws are the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Schools are only compelled to comply with these laws if they receive federal funding. These laws allow for the release of student directory information to military recruiters and also provide provisions that allow parents to opt-out from the release of this information. How these are interpreted could impact policies in regards to the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. DoD interprets that the opt-out provision of NCLB

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

does not directly affect the release of directory information contained within the ASVAB and that FERPA does not apply to the release of ASVAB scores because the scores do not become educational records until the school receives them. Student privacy advocates argue that these federal laws do not apply to the ASVAB.

Under the NCLB Act, schools must provide student directory information to military recruiters when it is requested. Schools must allow parents to opt-out of the release of directory information and must also provide parents with notification that they can opt-out.<sup>76</sup> This section also applies to recruiters from post secondary institutions, so an opt-out also applies to college recruiters. NCLB does not specifically apply to the ASVAB. While administering the ASVAB however, student information is collected, such as name and social security number. So even though a school has not specifically released information from their student directory when ASVAB scores are released to military recruiters, some of the same information contained in the directory such as student names are given to recruiters. Parents may feel that an opt-out from student directory information should include ASVAB scores even though the law does not address this issue. To mitigate this complaint, MEPCOM has the ability to process the test using a split option.<sup>77</sup> If a list is provided to test administrators with students that opted out, those tests can be processed under Option 8, while the remaining tests are processed under an option that allows results to be released to recruiters.

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<sup>76</sup>*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Public Law 107–110, (January 8, 2002), <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2012).

<sup>77</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12*, 10.

FERPA addresses student records. Schools that receive federal funding are compelled to not release student records to third parties except under certain circumstances. Similarly to NCLB, student directory information may be released by the school and does not require parental consent under FERPA. Before directory information is released, parents must be given notification and an opportunity to opt-out.<sup>78</sup> The primary difference in the release of student directory information under FERPA is that although schools can release directory information, they are not required to. Under NCLB schools receiving federal funding must release directory information when requested by recruiters, unless parents have opted-out.

In regards to the ASVAB the applicable provision in FERPA is that the law protects the privacy of student records. The interpretation from MEPCOM is that the ASVAB is exempt from that provision under FERPA.

ASVAB testing does not require a signed parental release statement. The ASVAB is exempt from the provisions of FERPA (1974, Buckley Amendment) that require a signed parental release statement. In 1974, the General Counsel of both the Department of Defense and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, ruled that ASVAB test results become records of the school only after those results are provided to the schools. Similar to other standardized testing services, schools assume responsibility for protecting information upon receipt from the testing service.<sup>79</sup>

Based on this interpretation federal laws support the ASVAB and there are not any restrictions at the federal level that would prevent a school from releasing ASVAB scores to military recruiters. The DoD interpretation of FERPA hinges upon when ASVAB data becomes a student record. This is significant because if school officials or other parties

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<sup>78</sup>“Family Educational Rights and Protection Act,” US Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> (accessed March 29, 2012).

<sup>79</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis & Strategy SY 11-12*, 10.

interpret that ASVAB data becomes a student record as soon as the test is taken, policies could be made that prevent the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters.

### State Laws and Policies

In certain states there are laws, proclamations, and policies in regards to the ASVAB. The release of scores has been prohibited by both laws and policies. Legislation has been vetoed and certain states have issued proclamations in support of the ASVAB. These laws and policies can be far reaching as the decision to release scores is taken away from the local level and decisions made at the state level affect the entire state where enacted.

The legislature of the State of California passed the Student and Family Privacy Protection Act on February 22, 2008. The act did not specifically mention Option 8, but included this language: “that pupil information obtained in conjunction with the administration of the ASVAB test will not be used by the Armed Forces for recruiting purposes.”<sup>80</sup> The provision only applied to ASVAB tests taken during school hours. So in effect military recruiters would not be able to use ASVAB data from tests administered in California public schools during school hours. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill. This is significant because if this legislation passed, it would have affected how ASVAB scores are released in the most populous state in the nation. The setback of this law did not stop other states from passing similar legislation.

Governor Martin O’Malley of the State of Maryland approved a law on April 13, 2010 prohibiting the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. A provision of the

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<sup>80</sup>California Legislature 2007-08 Regular Session Assembly Bill No. 2994. February 22, 2008.

law states: “Each public school in the state that administers the ASVAB shall choose “Option 8” as the score reporting option for military recruiter contact to prohibit the general release of any student information to military recruiters.”<sup>81</sup> The law is consistent with NCLB in that it provides that parents can opt-out of the release of directory information to military recruiters.

The passage of the Maryland law made the news in the metropolitan area of Washington, DC and also received attention in national news organizations. It is noteworthy because the law was the first of its kind to be passed in the nation.

Michael Birnbaum of the *Washington Post* reported that Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland already did not release ASVAB scores to military recruiters, but that the new law would make that statewide policy.<sup>82</sup> In dissent of the law Birnbaum, quotes LTC Christopher Beveridge the Baltimore MEPS commander from a letter to the state legislature as stating, “Much of the rhetoric behind the bill is bent on disrupting any efforts to build, support, or sustain the military.”<sup>83</sup> He also cited State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick as saying that the bill, “could interfere with an established process that assists many Maryland public school students . . . in the evaluation of appropriate career choices and in making academic decisions.”<sup>84</sup>

Margaret Barczak writing for the *Examiner* in Tampa, FL recognized that the law

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<sup>81</sup>Maryland General Assembly. House. Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters (April 13, 2010): House Bill 176.

<sup>82</sup>Birnbaum, “Maryland Law Limits Military Recruitment of Students.”

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*



is the first of its kind to be passed in the nation. She recognizes that before the passage of this law, ASVAB scores were given to military recruiters in some cases without the “knowledge or consent” from students. She states that this happened even if a student opted out of the release of directory information from NCLB.<sup>85</sup>

*USA Today* published an AP article with the headline, “Maryland 1st to Bar Schools Releasing Tests to Military.” The article also recognizes the aforementioned similar legislation in California that was vetoed. The article points out that members of the Maryland Coalition to Protect Student Privacy pushed for this legislation.<sup>86</sup> This is significant because it demonstrates the success of advocacy groups to affect policy change in regards to the ASVAB.

According to an article in *NPR* by Claudio Sanchez, the Maryland law was pushed through the legislature by Maryland Representative Sheila Hixson the leader of the House Ways and Means Committee. Sanchez states that the Maryland Coalition to Protect Student Privacy is now advising groups in other states to include, Wisconsin, Oregon, New Hampshire, Georgia, and North Carolina.<sup>87</sup> Bolstered by their success, these advocacy groups could influence legislatures in other states to pass similar legislation.

Advocacy groups provided testimony to the Maryland Senate and House of Representatives. The American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland provided testimony that states of the ASVAB, “This bill protects private student information collected during

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<sup>85</sup>Barczak, “ASVAB test results may now be withheld from recruiters.”

<sup>86</sup>“Maryland 1st to Bar Schools Releasing Tests to Military,” *USA Today*.

<sup>87</sup>Sanchez, “Looping Parents In On Armed Services Test.”

the administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (“ASVAB”) from being disclosed to military recruiters without the knowing consent of parents and students.”<sup>88</sup> The ACLU states that they do not oppose the administration of the test, but that too much personal information is collected and given to military recruiters when scores are released.

Similarly the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Maryland State Conference issued testimony to the Maryland House of Representatives supporting the bill requiring all Maryland public schools to select Option 8. Like the ACLU, the NAACP is concerned with student privacy rights, however the NAACP perception is that black and low income families are targeted by the ASVAB.

This especially applies to black families and low income households whose children seem to be the target of military recruiters. We believe military recruiters currently administer the test in schools with students whose families have few financial resources and limited education more than they do in schools where families have greater economic and education opportunities.<sup>89</sup>

The NAACP cites a lower income neighborhood where testing occurred and a higher income area where the school did not participate in the ASVAB. This is significant because there is a perception that recruiters target minorities and lower income Americans to join the military.

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<sup>88</sup>“Testimony for the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee: SB 778-Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters,” American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland.

<sup>89</sup>“Support: HB 176 (Public Schools–Student Information–Availability to Military Recruiters,” NAACP Maryland State Conference.

The reality is that lower income American enlisted recruits are underrepresented in the military. In fact 25 percent of enlisted soldiers come from the top income quintile. Wealthy neighborhoods are actually overrepresented as demonstrated by figure 1.

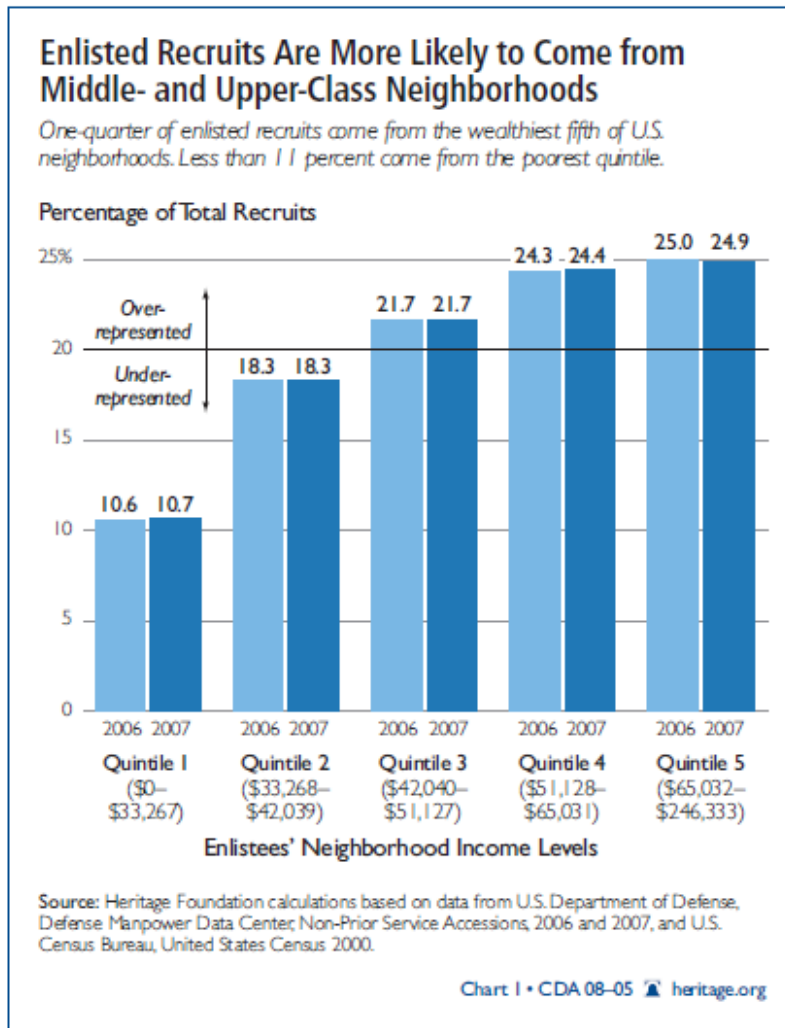


Figure 1. Enlisted Recruits Likely to Come from Middle and Upper Class Neighborhoods

Source: James Sherk, Shanea J. Watkins, “Who Serves in the US Military?: Demographic Characteristics of Enlisted Troops and Officers,” The Heritage Foundation (August 21, 2008): 3. Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Book of Readings*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, August 2011.

The NAACP may be correct in stating that black families are targeted. African American recruits are overrepresented in the Army in proportion to their population in the US, however so are white recruits. This is evident in table 9.

Table 9. Racial Composition of New Enlisted Recruits

### Racial Composition of New Enlisted Recruits in 2006 and 2007

Groups with recruit-to-population ratios greater than 1.0 are overrepresented among enlisted recruits, and groups with ratios less than 1.0 are underrepresented.

	2006 Percentage of Total U.S. Male Population, 18–24 Years Old	2006 Percentage of Total Recruits	2006 Recruit/Population Ratio	2007 Percentage of Total Recruits	2007 Recruit/Population Ratio*
White	61.99%	65.32%	1.05	65.50%	1.06
Black or African American	11.87	12.34	1.04	12.82	1.08
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.49	3.31	0.95	3.25	0.93
Combination of two or more races	1.56	0.57	0.37	0.66	0.42
American Indian/Alaska	0.73	2.16	2.96	1.96	2.68
Declined to specify race/ethnicity		3.49		2.76	

\* Calculated using 2006 population estimates.

Source: Heritage Foundation calculations based on data from U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center; Non-Prior Service Accessions, 2006–2007, and Steven Ruggles, Matthew Sobek, Trent Alexander, Catherine A. Fitch, Ronald Goeken, Patricia Kelly Hall, Miriam King, and Chad Ronnander, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 4.0, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Population Center, 2008, at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa> (July 21, 2008).

Source: James Sherk and Shanea J. Watkins, “Who Serves in the US Military?: Demographic Characteristics of Enlisted Troops and Officers,” The Heritage Foundation (August 21, 2008): 3. Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Book of Readings*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, August 2011.

Despite the evidence collected on a national scale there is still a perception that recruiters target lower income and minority students to enlist. Some schools have restrictions on how many times in a semester recruiters can visit a school while other schools offer unlimited access. If schools offer unlimited access, that could explain why recruiters seem to be present in some schools and not others. Additionally, lower income students may be underrepresented in the military if there is a correlation to lower ASVAB scores in schools that serve lower income neighborhoods.

The ASVAB is a voluntary test and schools are not required to administer it. MEPCOM produces a list of every public school and assigns a branch of service in the military as the responsible branch to schedule the ASVAB in that school. A recruiter may neglect to schedule an ASVAB and/or a school may decline to have the test administered at their school. So if the ASVAB is conducted in some schools and not others, it is not because the military failed to assign responsibility to that school.

So far Maryland is the only state that has passed into law a requirement for schools to select Option 8 when administering the ASVAB. Laws are not the only method of ensuring that public schools select Option 8 on a statewide basis.

Policies can also be made at the state department of education affecting schools in an entire state. The Hawaii State Department of Education requires public schools to select Option 8.<sup>90</sup> This policy in Hawaii has the same effect as the state law in Maryland that requires schools to select Option 8, thereby ensuring that ASVAB scores are not released to military recruiters.

In contrast not all actions taken at the state level are restrictive of the ASVAB either by limiting the release of scores or restricting the test from being taken. Other states have passed proclamations supporting the ASVAB. In the State of Alaska, Governor Sarah Palin proclaimed October of 2007 as “ASVAB Career Exploration Month.”<sup>91</sup> The proclamation recognized the importance of the CEP, however it did not mention the release of score information.

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<sup>90</sup>Kajihiro, “New policy will shield students from some unwanted military recruiter contact.”

<sup>91</sup>“Governor Palin Proclaims October 2007 as ASVAB Career Exploration Month,” *US Fed News Service*.

## School District Policies

Schools and school districts have set policies in regards to the release of ASVAB scores. Districts are influenced by advocacy organizations in some cases. Since only two states have restricted the release of ASVAB scores statewide, the policies made at the local level may have the most direct impact on the majority of recruiters.

Depending on the geographic area, recruiting stations may cover recruiting operations in part of a school district, an entire school school district, or the recruiting station may be responsible for multiple school districts. A metropolitan recruiting company may only be responsible for one school district. Since only two states have prohibited the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters, it is policies made at the local level that impact the majority of military recruiters.

The release of ASVAB scores in the largest US city is affected by a local policy. The New York City Department of Education addresses the ASVAB in Regulation of the Chancellor Number A-825. According to the policy only a small number of public schools administer the ASVAB. Of the schools that do, they are required to select Option 8. The rationale is stated as, “In order to protect the rights of students and parents to determine how student information is released to the military.”<sup>92</sup> It can be concluded that the ASVAB is not widely embraced in NYC if only a small number of schools administer the test.

The Career and Technical Education Department in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina published a memo in September 2007 requiring Charlotte-

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<sup>92</sup>“No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Disclosure of Information to Institutions of Higher Learning and the Military,” NYC Department of Education.

Mecklenburg schools to select Option 8 if the ASVAB is conducted during school hours.<sup>93</sup> While supportive of the military, CTE officials placed the restriction on the release of scores to ensure that it did not give an appearance that the district endorsed the ASVAB. This is significant because it demonstrates that a restriction on the release of scores does not necessarily mean that officials in a school district are not supportive of the military.

The San Diego City Schools district passed a policy similar to the one in Charlotte. “Aptitude tests shall not be given during the school day if the data obtained will be directly released to recruiting personnel.”<sup>94</sup> The policy cites that Option 8 must be selected to ensure consistency with opt-out provisions. A summary of the legal/policy basis cites that this section of the policy was based on similar policies in: the Los Angeles Unified School District, California, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, California, Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland, Prince George’s County Public Schools, Maryland, Hawaii Department of Education, and the New York City Department of Education.<sup>95</sup> This is significant because proponents of these restrictions are citing similar policies in other districts.

The purpose of the San Diego policy while placing restrictions on the ASVAB was written to balance recruiter access to students in the district. Recruiters are defined as “an entity with information for high school students about a specific college, university,

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<sup>93</sup>Chancey and Isenberg, Memorandum on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

<sup>94</sup>“Policy on Recruiting Activities in San Diego City Schools.”

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

trade school, apprenticeship, employer, military branch, or other post-secondary school or vocational opportunity.”<sup>96</sup> 760 KFMB AM radio reported on the perceptions that there was a wide variety of information available on the military but not as much information about higher education opportunities. At the board meeting where the policy was passed, “Several students from Mission Bay, Kearny, and Lincoln high schools said they had been subject to aggressive recruiting practices by military recruiters.”<sup>97</sup> If this reporting accurately reflected sentiments it can be concluded that this policy had less to do with student privacy concerns as it did with a lack of presence from college recruiters compared to the military, and aggressive recruiting tactics used by military recruiters.

In Maryland school systems in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties have had policies in place for several years restricting the release of ASVAB scores.<sup>98</sup> These policies have served as a basis for the State of Maryland to pass its law, and as the example from San Diego shows, these counties have served as a basis for policies in other states as well. This is significant because it demonstrates the possibility of a linkage to policies being passed at the state level after districts at the local level have restricted the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters.

In February 2007 a measure was introduced by Memphis Board of Education member Jeff Warren. The proposal would have restricted the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. The measure was spurred by an advocacy organization the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center. “George Crider, chairman of the Peace and Justice Center and a

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>“San Diego schools restrict military recruiters,” *760 KFMB AM Talk Radio*.

<sup>98</sup>Birnbaum, “Maryland Law Limits Military Recruitment of Students.”



military veteran, said he was concerned about a lack of informed consent and student privacy.”<sup>99</sup> The measure was tabled and never passed, but it again demonstrates involvement from an advocacy organization concerned about student privacy issues.

The Edmonds School District No. 15 in Washington State also has a policy that restricts the release of ASVAB scores. It states that schools and students will be informed that the test is voluntary, and “The test will generally be given under the option where the test scores and identifying information for students cannot be used for recruiting purposes . . . unless the student chooses another option.”<sup>100</sup> What this and other policies show is that they are not limited to one specific geographical area in the country. These policies have been implemented in states on both coasts, and the south. What they all have in common is the effect of limiting release information in a local area.

Other school districts are even further restrictive and do not allow for the ASVAB to be taken at all. The Oakland Unified School District’s policy states, “The District shall not administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Basic Test (ASVAB) or equivalent test.”<sup>101</sup> This is significant language because it would infer that not only does the district not support ASVAB testing, but that it does not support any testing that would provide career aptitude information to students. This may be a misinterpretation if the clause is only referring to tests affiliated with the armed services, however as stated the language does not clearly specify.

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<sup>99</sup>Aarons, “Board puts off decision on military test for students.”

<sup>100</sup>“Edmonds School District No. 15 Career Recruiting Guidelines,” Mountlake Terrace High School.

<sup>101</sup>“BP 5125.1.,” Oakland Unified School District Board Policy.

In a press release from the ACLU of Ohio, the Toledo City School Board of Education voted unanimously to implement a policy that prevents ASVAB testing in Toledo Public Schools. “TPS will no longer administer the official military entrance test known as ASVAB at any Toledo Public School. They acknowledge in policy that these tests should not be the responsibility of any TPS employee to administer.”<sup>102</sup> The ACLU touted this as a policy that protects student privacy and parents’ rights. The ACLU states that they worked in coalition with an organization named Learning, Not Recruiting.<sup>103</sup> This is another example of advocacy organizations influencing policies to restrict the ASVAB.

The examples of school districts not allowing ASVAB testing at all are limited. Much of the work done by advocacy organizations has been in support of student privacy while still purporting to support the military. These examples show a departure from districts that simply do not allow for the release of ASVAB test scores. Potentially one of two or both conclusions can be reached: these school districts are anti-military and do not want any association with the ASVAB or they do not see value in the ASVAB in that although it provides a career exploration program, the districts are not interested in the information that the ASVAB can provide for students.

#### National Lawyers Guild Los Angeles Chapter Legal Brief

The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter produced a thirty eight page legal brief stating that the ASVAB violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution,

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<sup>102</sup>“New Toledo Public Schools Policy Protects Student Privacy, Parents’ Rights,” American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

and California Statutes.<sup>104</sup> This is in contrast to the DoD interpretation that the ASVAB is compatible with FERPA. The main points in the legal brief are worth examining to determine if their legal interpretation may be valid. If the legal interpretation is strong enough, it would be inexpensive insurance for a school district to pass a policy to restrict the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters so that a school district would not be faced with legal challenges from advocacy groups, parents, and or students for violating parental rights and or student privacy.

Although the legal brief is not dated, it can be inferred based on the language of the brief that it was written before the Los Angeles Unified School District passed its own policy that restricts the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. The brief contains language that the district could adopt to ensure compliance with their interpretation of statutes. This is significant because the coordinated action of advocacy groups and lawyers representing them have demonstrated success in getting school districts to change their policies in regards to the release of ASVAB scores.

The main points of the brief are worth examining because it provides a logical unemotional argument that is cited, and observes legal precedence. In the introduction the 1979 Supreme Court Case *Belloti V. Baird* is cited.

Additionally, as the Supreme Court has acknowledged, minors are vulnerable and unable to “make critical decision on their behalf. (*Belloti v. Baird* (1979) 443 U.S. 443 U.S. 622, 623.) In light of these principles, it is not surprising that Congress and the California legislature have afforded parents almost absolute control over

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<sup>104</sup>The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter, The Los Angeles Unified School Districts’s Current Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California Statutes.

their children's education records, granting parents the right to regulate the dissemination of this information under most circumstances.<sup>105</sup>

If ASVAB scores are released to military recruiters, they receive information about a student that they could use to “tailor recruiting methods to individual students . . . absent parental supervision.”<sup>106</sup> This is accurate, a recruiter would tailor a conversation based on the interests and needs of a student, however a minor cannot join the military without signed parental consent.

In providing background information, the brief outlines FERPA and contrasts it with California Education Code Section 49060, 49073, and 49076. The laws are both similar in how they protect student education records. FERPA does not prohibit the release of student education records, it conditions the release of federal funds on following the provisions of the law. The California Education Code actually prohibits the release of student education records except under certain circumstances. While FERPA allows the release of directory information, the California Education Code minimizes the release of student directory information without parental consent.<sup>107</sup>

Under FERPA and California Education Code Section 49076 the interpretation in the legal brief is that ASVAB test results are considered educational records. Although the definitions of a student education record are written differently, an education record is generally considered information that teachers or school officials maintain on a student that is personally identifiable back to the student. “ASVAB test results contain a student’s

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>California Education Code 49069–49062.

name, social security number, address, telephone number, date of birth, sex, ethnic group identification, educational grade, plans after graduation, individual item responses to ASVAB subtests and ASVAB scores.”<sup>108</sup> Since this information allows a recruiter to identify a student, ASVAB test results are student education records. The release of scores to military recruiters would then be contingent on parental consent.

The brief identifies that the ASVAB is “administered by school officials, on school property, during school hours.”<sup>109</sup> The DoD interpretation does acknowledge that ASVAB scores are student records, it just interprets that the results do not become student records until the results are released back to the school from MEPCOM. While the brief points out that school officials, property, and hours are used to administer the test, DoD would demonstrate that the MEPCOM is administering the test with school help. Each side takes the same set of facts and interprets them differently.

When taking the ASVAB students are required to sign a Privacy Act Statement. The interpretation provided by the legal brief states that students “are ordinarily not permitted to consent to the release of their own educational records.”<sup>110</sup> A student does not have the right to release their own records under FERPA until the student has turned eighteen or is attending a postsecondary institution. So even though the student signs a Privacy Act Statement, it does not satisfy the requirement of parental consent.

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<sup>108</sup>The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter, The Los Angeles Unified School Districts’ Current Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California Statutes, 11.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 15.

NCLB, FERPA and the California Education Code allow for parents to opt-out of the release of student directory information. The brief states that the Los Angeles Unified School District is not complying with the opt-out requests made by parents when ASVAB scores are released to recruiters since the results contain information contained within the student directory. The DoD interpretation is that it is not the school providing the information, but the student. The interpretation from the brief is that it does not matter how the directory information was obtained and that a student cannot override a parent opt-out request.

Arguments in the brief using the California Education Code have been relevant for all of the US since the primary interpretations also relied on NCLB and FERPA, both federal laws. The right of privacy is explicit in the California Constitution, but not in the US Constitution.<sup>111</sup> The points made on privacy from a legal stand point may only pertain to California, but since proponents of Option 8 selection frequently reference student privacy as a reason to not release ASVAB scores, the points made in the brief are still relevant to this research.

A student has a reasonable expectation of privacy with their education records. The US Supreme Court in 1977 in *Whalen v. Roe* held that “customs, practices, and physical settings surrounding particular activities may create or inhibit reasonable expectations of privacy.”<sup>112</sup> Since students are informed by teachers that their education records are confidential, they develop reasonable expectations of privacy, especially

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<sup>111</sup>Constitutional Law: Privacy Rights and Personal Autonomy, *Justia*.

<sup>112</sup>The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter, The Los Angeles Unified School Districts’s Current Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California Statutes, 23.

while in a school setting. Since the ASVAB is administered at school, based on this interpretation, students may have an expectation that their test results will be kept private.

Although students sign a Privacy Act Statement, the brief argues that the Privacy Act Statement does not specifically state that scores will be released to military recruiters. “Further, students are repeatedly told by the school and *military* officials who administer the test that the ASVAB is a career/vocational test and not a military test.”<sup>113</sup> If students are not fully informed about the test, then students may not realize how military recruiters use the results from the test. Further, when parents sign an opt-out from the release of directory information, they too reasonably expect privacy of student information.

Since the military encourages school counselors to emphasize that the CEP will help students identify career interests, strengths, and weaknesses, but that scores are used by military recruiters, the brief states that schools are misusing ASVAB information. Students believe the purpose of the test is to help with career information while the test provides recruiters with a sources of leads.<sup>114</sup>

This falls into a category that the California Supreme Court would call a privacy “mischief” where “the improper use of information properly obtained for a specific purpose, for example the use of it for another purpose or the disclosure of it to some third party.”<sup>115</sup> As long as the purpose of the ASVAB is explained, it would not violate this privacy “mischief.”

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>115</sup>*Porten v. University of San Francisco* 64 Cal. App. 3d 825.

By selecting Option 8, the brief states that schools would minimize or even eliminate the student privacy issues that have been addressed. The brief argues that without a uniform policy in the school district, the current school policy violates equal protection which is protected under the California Constitution. According to the brief students in all schools are afforded privacy rights. If two students take the test in different schools and one school selects Option 8 and the other does not, both students did not have their rights protected in the same way. “The District’s failure to adopt a uniform policy not only creates disparities with respect to the amount of protection afforded to students’ privacy rights, this failure also creates disparities with the respect to students’ education rights.”<sup>116</sup> Under equal protection, the brief argues that the Los Angeles Unified School District needs to have a uniform policy regarding the release of ASVAB scores.

A district wide policy is great if it supports your view. A district could mandate that all students take the ASVAB and scores be released and that would be great for military recruiters, but upset student privacy advocates. Likewise, a district policy that restricts the release of ASVAB scores is great for advocacy organizations that support that policy, but limits the career counseling advice that students may potentially receive from military recruiters, and also makes the job of a recruiter more difficult in determining which students qualify for military service.

Advocacy organizations have been successful over the last few years changing policies and laws that restrict the ASVAB in California, New York, Maryland, Ohio and

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<sup>116</sup>The National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter, The Los Angeles Unified School Districts’ Current Administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Violates NCLB, FERPA, the California Constitution, and California Statutes, 31.



Hawaii. Bolstered by their success, it is likely to see advocacy organizations increase the amount of schools that selection Option 8 in the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### Findings

The last chapter answered the question of why schools do not release ASVAB scores by answering the secondary research questions. Newspaper and journal articles captured the sentiment of students and parents that were concerned with how the ASVAB is administered, the purpose of the test, and issues dealing with student privacy in regards to the release of scores to military recruiters. Advocacy organizations, many of which are anti-military, are concerned with the presence of recruiters in the schools and the release of ASVAB scores that violate student privacy. Advocacy organizations through awareness campaigns, and influence of school officials and politicians have promoted laws and policies that restrict the release of scores to military recruiters.

Depending on interpretation of the law, the ASVAB is either compliant with the spirit of federal laws, specifically NCLB and FERPA, or it is not. DoD interprets that the the ASVAB is compliant with NCLB because directory information that is provided from the test, even if a parent opts-out of the school providing the data, is in compliance because the school is not releasing the administrative data, simply the student is providing it. DoD also interprets that it is compliant with the prohibition of the release of education records except under limited circumstances in the FERPA law because the ASVAB is administered by MEPCOM and not the school, and that ASVAB results do not become a student record until the school receives the results of the test.

As demonstrated by the National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles Chapter there is an interpretation of the federal law that is contrary to the DoD position. If ASVAB scores

are released to military recruiters it violates NCLB if a parent opted-out of the release of directory information to the military. Although the law does not specifically address the ASVAB, the argument in the brief is that by opting out, parents have a reasonable expectation that directory information is protected no matter how it is obtained by the military. The brief also interprets the ASVAB test results as a student record because the test is administered with school officials, at the school, and during school hours.

Based on the interpretation of federal law or advocacy to protect student privacy, policies and laws have been developed to restrict the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters by enforcing that schools select Option 8, in which ASVAB scores are not released to military recruiters. As individual schools and school districts adopt these policies, advocacy organizations bolstered by their success, spread the message to other schools and school districts, and also advocate at the state level. As a result the State of Hawaii Department of Education requires all public schools to select Option 8 as does the State of Maryland by matter of public law.

In 2004, 3.80 percent of ASVAB tests were scored with the selection of Option 8. This percentage has risen every year for the past seven years to a high of 13.91 percent of Option 8 selection in 2011.<sup>117</sup> This number could continue to grow if the number of school districts that pass policies that restrict the release of ASVAB scores increases. Table 2 does show a fluctuation in the number of SA contracts, but it appears that the increase in Option 8 testing has not had an effect on recruiting. The larger problem may not be the release of scores, but that there are fewer students taking the test.

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<sup>117</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis & Strategy SY 11-12*, 27.

### Additional Research

Further information is needed to understand the depth of the policies and laws that have been implemented. Currently there is not any research that has determined the number of high schools, the number of school districts, or total number of states that have passed policies restricting the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. This information is significant because it would inform the military at what level command influence needs to be directed. A school policy can be influenced by a recruiting station commander and a company commander. School district policies can be influenced by a company commander and a battalion commander. State policies and laws can be influenced by a battalion commander and a brigade commander. Having a complete picture of where the policies are implemented will help MEPCOM and USAREC as well as other branches of the military determine where efforts need to be focused.

A surprise finding during the course of research for this topic identified that there are school districts that prohibit the ASVAB from being taken. These policies were found in Oakland, California and Toledo, Ohio.<sup>118</sup> Since virtually all of the privacy concerns are eliminated when Option 8 testing is selected, it raises the question as to why a school district would prohibit ASVAB testing. Is the ASVAB effective, and does the test do what it is supposed to do?

In 2007, the Heritage Foundation provided information identifying enlisted representation ratios for all fifty states. Most of the policies and laws highlighted in this thesis that restrict the ASVAB were passed after this research was conducted. A ratio of

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<sup>118</sup>“New Toledo Public Schools policy protects student privacy, parents’ rights,” American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio.

one or higher is indicative of equal or over representation, while a ratio of less than one is a state that is underrepresented. As a sample the following states with restrictive ASVAB policies had these ratios: California-0.80, Hawaii-1.08, Maryland-0.88, New York-0.68, and Ohio-1.06. As a sample, the pro-military states had these ratios: Alaska-1.17, Georgia-1.22, and Texas-1.31.<sup>119</sup> Additional research needs to be conducted to compare enlisted representation to districts that restrict the ASVAB.

Studies have been completed on the effectiveness of the ASVAB. While nearly all find that there is a link between the ASVAB and military careers, some studies question whether the ASVAB is effective in determining civilian careers, and whether there is a test bias against females and minorities. While there are studies that look at these areas and studies have concluded that the ASVAB is effective and some would argue that it is not, there is an area of research of ASVAB effectiveness that has yet to be completed.

The Department of Education has developed the sixteen career clusters which have been adopted by all fifty states. While the ASVAB CEP has released documentation to show the linkage between military careers and the sixteen career clusters, there have not been any studies conducted that show that the ASVAB is a relevant tool to help students pick a career cluster track in high school.

Other career aptitude tools are used by states to include the Kruder career test, and in Missouri the Missouri Connections test. Competing tests to the ASVAB should be researched to determine when these tests are being administered, how much they cost,

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<sup>119</sup>James Sherk and Shanea J. Watkins, "Who Serves in the US Military?: Demographic Characteristics of Enlisted Troops and Officers," The Heritage Foundation (August 21, 2008): 8. Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Book of Readings*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, August 2011.

and if they are providing value to the schools and students in making career cluster determinations.

Even if it is determined that the ASVAB is a relevant to the 16 career clusters, it can also be questioned if the ASVAB is providing timely data for student to select the career cluster that they will concentrate in. Many students are selecting the career cluster to follow in some states while in the 8th grade. If the ASVAB is taken during the junior year of high school, it may not be providing schools with the relevant data that the schools and students need.

If the ASVAB CEP data is not getting to schools and students when they most need it, the argument from advocacy organizations that the ASVAB CEP is really just a military test has been bolstered. As a result, it is possible that schools may determine that ASVAB testing no matter how scores are released may not see the value in testing their students, and therefore not offer the test.

In order to ensure that the ASVAB is relevant, further research into the adoption of the 16 career clusters by the states and how the ASVAB can help with career exploration in the career clusters is vital to the CEP. If the test is determined to be relevant, but that students need to take it earlier, such as in the 8th grade, the ASVAB may no longer be beneficial to military recruiters because test scores for enlistment purposes are only valid for two years.

To fully get a grasp on Option 8 testing, the schools that choose not to conduct the ASVAB need to be looked at as well. For example, the New York City policy states that not many schools in the district administered the ASVAB. If the policy required all schools to administer the ASVAB and select Option 8, the number of tests that were

counted under Option 8 scoring would increase. Similarly, if districts pass policies prohibiting the ASVAB, Option 8 testing would decline, so a decline in Option 8 testing, does not necessarily mean it is a better outcome for the military if the number of tests taken also decline.

### Recommendations

The DoD needs to continue to be a valued partner in our nation's secondary education institutions. In order to earn the trust and respect of students, educators, school officials, and the American public, the military must ensure that the issue of student privacy is respected and addressed.

When parents opt-out of directory release information to military recruiters under NCLB, the military should assume that it is desire of parents not have ASVAB scores released to military recruiters. Even though NCLB does not restrict the release of ASVAB scores, the opt-out from a parent implies their intent. The ASVAB CEP *Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* suggests that schools could handle this by doing a split option, where students that are on the opt-out list have their tests scored as Option 8, and all other students are scored under a selection of Option 1-6.<sup>120</sup> While this is only described as an option, it should be policy that all ASVAB tests are scored using the split option method.

Even if tests are scored using a split-option, there may still be students that have tests scored under Option 1-6 that do not want their test scores released to military recruiters. These students should have an option on the administrative portion of the test

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<sup>120</sup>ASVAB Career Exploration Program, *Analysis & Strategy SY 11-12*, 10.

to personally opt-out if that is their desire. If a student is later interested in military service, they can later authorize the release of their score to a military recruiter.

The military should also adopt ground rules when using ASVAB data to contact students. Since ASVAB data is released to all services, a high school student could potentially be reached by the Army, Army National Guard, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. If each service contacts the student two times in the course of a month, that may not seem excessive to the service component, but it does to the student that could potentially receive ten or more phone calls. It would be wise to limit the number of phone calls that recruiters can make as a result of the release of ASVAB scores.

Another ground rule that would help address the concerns of parents is to develop a policy that prohibits a recruiter from conducting an initial appointment with a high school prospect, unless the parent is present for that meeting, or the recruiter has spoken to the parents and received their permission to meet with their son or daughter. Parents want to be involved in a decision to join the military, and recruiters should respect the involvement of parents. This is a good policy for all parties. It is better to have a parent as a positive influencer because that will give the recruiter an ally in ensuring that their new recruit actually ships to basic training.

In addition to parents, the concerns of advocacy organizations need to be addressed. To address concerns the *ASVAB CEP Analysis and Strategy SY 11-12* - recommends to, "Invite anti-recruitment, anti-ASVAB CEP group members to observe a post-test interpretation session at the school. Often, individuals enlisted to work in opposition to the ASVAB CEP or recruiting are simply unaware of program



components.”<sup>121</sup> Not only may these organizations not be aware of the quality of the ASVAB, they also may not be aware that recruiters are prohibited from collecting student contact information during the post-test interpretation.

Advocacy organizations are also concerned that the ASVAB is simply a military test that purports to trick students into taking the test by saying that it will help with career exploration, when it is really just a way for recruiters to obtain leads. It is true that the ASVAB CEP contains the AFQT, but it also provides students with valuable career exploration information.

It is not readily apparent by looking at the ASVAB website or ASVAB materials that the test is sponsored by DoD. The sponsorship by DoD is acknowledged in small print at the bottom of the ASVAB CEP website. Much work has been done to associate the test primarily with career exploration than with the military. The test is not referred to as the “Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery,” it is simply called “ASVAB.”

Literature and information should be straightforward that there is a DoD connection. It may go against recent efforts to draw a distinction, however the question should be posed- is it better for DoD to tell the ASVAB story or is it better for advocacy organizations to tell the ASVAB story? The military will earn trust by being transparent and informing parents, students, and educators what will be done with the test scores in addition to the great benefit that a career exploration program is for students.

In addition to being transparent, DoD needs to engage in an information operations campaign. There is a difference between a high school student receiving information about the military and actually joining. A seventeen year old minor can sign

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 9.

a military contract, but only with parental consent. It is important for educators and parents to realize that they are influencers that are part of the decision to join the military and not separate from it.

While DoD promotes the benefits of the ASVAB providing career exploration to students, DoD could engage in a social media campaign and share ASVAB success stories. Promoting both civilian and military career success stories will help demonstrate that the test can be equally beneficial to those pursuing either a civilian or a military career.

The military should also engage its community partners to promote the benefits of the ASVAB. In USAREC, battalions have established grassroots advisory boards. Board members consist of celebrities, city council members, business executives, and community leaders. These influential members of society should be engaged to promote the ASVAB and ASVAB friendly policies.

#### Effect on Students

Knowing an ASVAB score and what a student intends to do after graduation will help a recruiter help a student. A student may want to be a truck driver, or a paralegal, but may not have financial means to attend a post-secondary school. Sometimes the military can help a student achieve their goals, and sometimes it cannot. By not releasing scores to military recruiters, students may suffer from missed opportunities, simply because a recruiter was unaware a student qualified and did not engage them.

While students should be afforded a right to privacy, they should also be afforded to know their full range of options. Many students are simply not interested in a military

career, but there are also times that a student may not know they were eligible for one, and that should be an option left on the table.

There are policies and laws that restrict the release of ASVAB scores to military recruiters. Additional research is required to understand the extent of these laws and policies in the US. Further studies also need to be taken to ensure that the ASVAB is still relevant with the advent of the sixteen Department of Education career clusters. By implementing a strategy that respects student privacy and engaging the public, students can be afforded the full range of career opportunities that are available to them.

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