



Maxwell-Gunter AFB Personnel’s Perceptions of K-12 School Options in the Montgomery River Region

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Introduction

The State of Alabama's K-12 public educational system has performed poorly nationally for many years. The annual 2019 *U.S News and World Report's* educational rankings placed Alabama at number 49. Although the *U.S News and World Report's* reporting methodology has inherent bias (Liebowitz & Kelly, 2019), it is easily recognized and often reported in state and local news articles (Ross, 2019). With such broad awareness of the weaknesses in Alabama's educational system, it is an area of emphasis for the United States Air Force (USAF) and its members. The quality of public schools is often attributed to an Airman's decision to remain on active duty (Everstine, 2020). This, among other multi-faceted factors, prompted the USAF to explore its policies on strategic basing decisions (Esper, Spencer, & Wilson, 2018). In February 2020, USAF Secretary Barbara Barrett announced that the service will consider the academic performance, along with additional criteria such as school climate, of public schools in future basing decisions (Air Force News Services, 2020, February 24).

In 2016, the USAF altered the officer development education selection declination policy. Officers were allowed to decline Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE), and Senior Developmental Education (SDE) through the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). After this personnel policy had been in effect for one year, AU was informed Airmen were declining these IDE and SDE opportunities due to the public school systems in the Montgomery River Region (Johnson, 2018). With the Alabama K-12 public schools impacting Airmen's acceptance of assignments or continuation of active duty, AU committed to partnering with its community and the State of Alabama. In 2018, the AU Commander and President developed a Working Group to identify, recommend, and implement ways to improve K-12 public educational

opportunities for the children of Air University faculty, staff, and students. With the Alabama K-12 public schools impacting Airmen's acceptance of assignments or continuation of active duty, AU committed to partnering with its community and the State of Alabama. In 2018, the AU Commander and President developed a Working Group to identify, recommend, and implement ways to improve K-12 public educational opportunities for the children of Air University faculty, staff, and students.

This built on discussions over the previous three years. In November 2015, as part of AU Transformation, a working group was formed to recommend how to achieve Goal 1.1 of the Strategic Plan: "Recruit, develop, and retain high quality faculty." The group identified "access to free, high quality K-12 education" as a high-impact initiative that would improve the quality of AU's faculty. Subsequent discussions with AU leadership and the Board of Visitors noted that this initiative would also benefit students and staff. In 2017, AU created the position of Chief Communication Officer (CCO). The CCO, together with the 42 Air Base Wing (ABW), took the lead in establishing relations with key educational leaders in the Montgomery River Region. In April 2018, the Faculty Senate identified access to free, high-quality K-12 education for their children to the Board of Visitors as an area of concern. Board members were supportive and offered other potential courses of action.

With the increasing focus on public schools and Air Force basing decisions, the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force have closely monitored the status of public education. During the Military Child Education Coalition's Special Symposium (Duncan, Goldfein. & Waldo, 2019), General David L. Goldfein stated,

"What I hear loud and clear when I travel from Airmen is this is the number one quality of life issue for Airmen and that is the quality of education of their children. They tell me you can deploy me Chief, you can deploy me many times, you can put me in rather harsh conditions we'll do a lot to defend the nation. But once you start affecting the education of my children I've got a tough decision to make. So, this is existential to the United States Air Force. I think for my fellow Joint Chiefs they'd probably say the same thing."

As part of this effort, Lieutenant General Hecker, Air University's President and Commander, directed the K-12 Working Group to explore Maxwell-Gunter personnel's perception of K-12 school choices within the Montgomery River Region.

Significance of the Study

This study examined Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel's perceptions of the various K-12 school options in the Montgomery River Region. In particular, the study explored the influence of K-12 school options on decision-making prior to their permanent change of station to the Montgomery River Region. It also investigated what options were selected once in the Montgomery River Region and how they view school fit. Finally, personnel's perceptions of new courses of action under consideration were solicited to gauge their interest and support.

The study results provide the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, and the AU Commander and President an understanding of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel's perception of the K-12 school options within the Montgomery River Region. The results may also assist the AU Commander and DoDEA in advocating for identified courses of action or developing new options. Finally, the results will potentially benefit the Working

Group, CCO, and the 42 Air Base Wing in their communications and community engagement efforts.

Assumptions

This study attempted to ascertain a portrait of the Maxwell-Gunter personnel's perception of public K-12 public school choices within the Montgomery River Region. The researchers assumed Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel would agree to participate and that the respondents would complete the survey accurately and in a trustworthy manner. The researchers assumed the respondents depended upon their own perceptions and understandings of the terms and variables presented.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were set for this study.

- Only those individuals with an established email account within the Maxwell-Gunter all email distribution list were contacted to participate in the survey.
- Only data collected in the time frame of the study were considered in the analysis phase.
- Only those Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel with school-aged children could fully engage in the complete survey. Personnel who initially responded they did not currently have school-aged children were immediately directed to the end of the survey.

Limitations

There are inherent limitations to this study. Some of the limitations are as follows:

- The findings can only be generalized to Maxwell-Gunter personnel.

- The study was developed to answer the research questions. Additional research must be conducted to address questions that may arise from this study.
- In order to capture all data for a comprehensive study of K-12 perceptions, attitudes, and opinions, the survey may have taken longer to complete for respondents with multiple children to report.

Methodology

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to ascertain the perceptions of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel on K-12 school options in the Montgomery River Region. A convergent parallel design entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process, weighs the methods equally, analyzes the two components independently, and interprets the results together (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). Methodology will consist of population, research questions, instrumentation, data collection procedure, and data analysis schema.

Population

This study solicited responses from all Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel. The population of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel includes Active Duty, Guard and Reserve on Title 10 orders, Guard and Reserves not on Title 10 orders, Civilians, and Contractors. Although educational school choice may often be viewed as an issue for active duty personnel, this study sought all personnel's opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of K-12 school choices in the Montgomery River Region to provide a holistic view. In addition, courses of action under consideration may also have an impact on those who are not active duty.

Research Questions

The study examined the following research questions:

- 1) Have Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel altered their children's educational experiences after transitioning into Maxwell-Gunter as their permanent change of station (PCS)? If so, what are the school choices since arriving at Maxwell-Gunter and how did the personnel view their children's school fit during the 2019-2020 academic year?
- 2) What factors influenced Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between personnel statuses in the probability of their children attending one of the five school choice courses of action under consideration at Maxwell-Gunter?
 - a. If so, is there a significant difference in how the various personnel statuses viewed the importance of factors influencing their response to one of the five courses of action?
 - b. What additional benefits or areas of concern, from its personnel would senior leaders need to consider in determining additional school choices?

Instrumentation

As stated previously, this study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to ascertain the perceptions of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel on K-12 school options in the Montgomery River Region. A convergent parallel design entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process, weighs the methods equally, analyzes the two components independently, and interprets the results together (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). The survey consisted of Part A, perceptions of current K-12 options and Part B, perceptions of future K-12 options. Part A of the survey sought to explore the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of the Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel with current K-12 school options. Respondents identified demographic information such as their

status at Maxwell- Gunter AFB, number of school-aged children, types of schools their children attended prior to PCS, factors important to personnel when making school choices for their children, their perception of their children's school fit, and factors contributing to personnel's decision to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette. Part B of the survey sought to explore attitudes and opinions of the Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel on future K-12 school choices under consideration.

Subject Matter Experts at Air University Headquarters reviewed the survey for content and construct validity. The survey was then sent to two Subject Matters Experts at area universities in Alabama for a review of face validity. A small focus group of Maxwell-Gunter AFB spouses also reviewed the survey design and provided feedback. Additionally, AU's Online Survey Tool's review function—Qualtrics Expert Review iQ—was applied to the survey construction. The survey construction passed Expert Review iQ in the following areas: questions easy to understand, valid display logic, end of survey scoring, valid piped text, complete translations, timing/metadata questions accompanied by another question, accessibility, and no sensitive data collected. Once all information was collected on the survey design, appropriate changes within the survey were completed. The survey and research protocol were submitted to Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), AU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Record. A Not Research, Not Human Subjects Research IRB determination was obtained (See Appendix A).

A pilot study was then conducted with 30 respondents to review the survey's reliability. There were four Likert scales used in Part A of the survey. *Factors Influencing School Choice* examined the level of importance of 14 factors identified by GreatSchools.org (2013) in parents'

attitudes and behaviors when choosing schools. Respondents completed *Factors Influencing School Choice* on a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: *unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important*. The Cronbach alpha yielded a coefficient of .864, an indication of good internal consistency reliability. The second scale sought to explore forms of information used by parents in making informed school choice decisions. *Informational Forms* employed a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: *unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important*. The Cronbach alpha yielded a coefficient of .743, an indication of good internal consistency reliability. For the third scale, respondents were asked to complete an existing *School Fit* scale developed for Panorama Education (Bahena, Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2016) for each child reported. The Cronbach alpha yielded a coefficient of .936, an indication of a strong level of internal consistency reliability. Finally, respondents were asked to complete a *Factors Contributing to PCS as a Geographical Bachelor or Bachelorette* scale. The factors were gleaned from discussions with military personnel and their dependents. *Factors Contributing to PCS as a Geographical Bachelor or Bachelorette* employed a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: *unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important*. A Cronbach alpha was not calculated on this scale, as there was an insufficient number of cases for analysis.

Part B of the study sought to explore Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel's perceptions of future K-12 school choices. Part B employed two Likert scales. The respondents completed *Courses of Action Under Consideration* on a five-point Likert scale: *not at all probable, somewhat improbable, neutral, somewhat probable; and very probable*. The Cronbach alpha yielded a coefficient of .833, an indication of good internal consistency reliability. Respondents

completed a *Factors That May Influence Response to a COA* scale. Respondents were asked to complete a five-point Likert scale, measuring the level of importance (*not at all important; slightly important, moderately important, very important and extremely important*) to seven items often attributed to parent's behavior when choosing a school such as special education services. The Cronbach alpha yielded a coefficient of .658, an indication of internal consistency reliability. Open-ended items were included, at the end of the survey, for respondents to provide additional comments regarding the benefits or areas for concern.

Data Collection Procedures

The first step in the data collection procedure was to seek approval through the Air Force Research Laboratory, AU's IRB of Record, as the study engages human subjects. A Not Research, Not Human Subjects Research determination was made (Appendix A). The survey instrument was distributed to all Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel for voluntary participation via the Maxwell-Gunter all email distribution list under the signature of Lieutenant General James B. Hecker's, AU's Commander and President. The email contained a hyperlink as well as a QR Code for printing and completion at home with a spouse present. Respondents were instructed to complete one survey per family unit. The survey was open for 44 days. After the initial survey link was sent, Lt. Gen. Hecker held a series of All Calls, during the week of 9 March 2020, for AU personnel. During each All Call, there was an emphasis on the K-12 Working Group's effort to engage local and State K-12 officials. Following these All Calls, the survey was left open for an additional three days to allow further participation.

Data Analysis Schema

This study explored the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel on K-12 school-options within the Montgomery River Region. A data analysis schema was developed for the study's three research questions.

Research Question One sought to describe the respondents previous and current school choice options for their children. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed in answering the question.

Research Question Two explored the factors that geographical bachelors and bachelorettes considered prior to their PCS to Maxwell Gunter. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed in answering the question.

Research Question Three, Part A, explored the probability of Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel of enrolling their children in one of the five K-12 courses of action under consideration by senior leadership. As a result of the disparity among the respondents in the personnel groups (Active Duty, Guard and Reserve on Title 10 orders, Guard and Reserves not on Title 10 orders, Civilians, and Contractors), a non-parametric test, Kruskal-Wallis, was employed to analyze differences in the mean scores between the personnel groups' responses to the courses of action and the factors that influenced their courses of action choice. The quantitative items were reviewed using descriptive and inferential statistics, using SPSS version 26. The preset alpha of .05 was used in all inferential statistical analyses.

To address Research Question Three, Part B, open-ended questions sought to capture any additional benefits or areas of concern of the courses of action under consideration by senior

leadership. Qualitative items were reviewed using TextiQ, in Qualtrics, to identify thematic codes and subcategories. The thematic codes were then evaluated for subcategories attributing to the themes' composition and given a sentiment of positive, neutral, mixed, or negative.

Findings

A total of 769 Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel voluntarily responded to the survey with the following personnel statuses: 487 (63%) Active Duty, 17 (2.2%) Guard and Reserve on Title 10 orders, 13 (1.7%) Guard and Reserve not on Title 10 orders, 231 (30%) Civilians, and 21 (2.7%) Contractors. Further, of the 769 respondents, 669 (87%) reported school-aged children in 2019-2020. The total number of children reported was 998 excluding pre-kindergarten and a total of 1,138 to include pre-kindergarten (See Table 1). Maxwell-Gunter AFB does not have data on the total number of school-age children for all personnel. However, the number of Active Duty school-aged children reported a 42.8% return rate of those active-duty personnel with school-aged children based on the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMCD) data over the last four years ($N = 1,901$) (See Appendix B).

Table 1

Number Respondents with School-Aged Children and Total Count of Children by Personnel Status

Personnel Status	<i>n</i>	Number of Respondents with School-Aged Children	Number of Children Excluding Pre-K	Number of School Aged Children
Active Duty	487	471	705	814
Guard Reserve with Title 10	17	14	20	22
Guard Reserve without Title 10	13	12	20	23
Civilian	231	154	222	253
Contractor	21	18	21	26
Totals	769	669	988	1,138

Research Question 1:

Have Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel altered their children’s educational experiences after transitioning into Maxwell-Gunter as their permanent change of station (PCS)? If so, what are the school choices since arriving at Maxwell-Gunter and how did the personnel view their children’s school fit during the 2019-2020 academic year?

Of the 769 respondents, 669 (87%) reported their household included school-aged children. Respondents were requested to complete Item 3, *Prior to receiving orders to Maxwell-Gunter AFB, please indicate the type of school your children were enrolled: [Mark all that apply.]*. Of the 669 respondents, the majority of the respondents’ children attended public schools ($n = 393, 58.74\%$), with the majority of those personnel having an Active Duty status ($n = 271, 68.96\%$). Private schools were the second largest type of school setting for all respondents ($n = 122, 18.24\%$) with 79 (64.75%) of those respondents on Active duty status. There were 90 (13.45%) respondents who were previously at a DoDEA school, with 78 (8z.66%) of those respondents on Active duty status (See Table 2).

Table 2

Type of School Maxwell-Gunter AFB Children Attended Prior to PCS into Maxwell-Gunter AFB (n = 669)

Personnel Status	Public School	Private School	Homeschooled	Charter School	DoDEA School (on-base school)	Online Public School
Active Duty	271	79	33	8	78	2
Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	10	3	1	0	0	0
Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	5	4	3	0	0	0

Personnel Status	Public School	Private School	Homeschooled	Charter School	DoDEA School (on-base school)	Online Public School
Civilian	96	32	15	1	11	0
Contractor	11	4	1	0	1	0
Totals	393	122	53	9	90	2
	58.74%	18.24%	7.92%	1.35%	13.45%	0.30%

For each child reported, respondents were asked to indicate the school setting in which each of their children were enrolled in the 2019 – 2020 school year. Of the 1,138, there were 1,057 (93%) children reported by respondents in Items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30, *Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year.* In viewing Items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 per child reported and the summation of the items, Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel have primarily enrolled their children in public schools ($n = 556, 58.74\%$), and personnel have least enrolled their children in state-approved online schools ($n = 8, 0.76\%$) (See Table 3).

Table 3

Type of School Maxwell-Gunter AFB Children Attended During the 2019-2010 Academic Year

Child	Status	DoDEA	Public	Private	Homeschooled	Online Public School	Total Responses
1	Active Duty	97	204	47	29	2	389
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	5	6	1	0	0	13
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	2	3	3	2	0	10
	Civilian	15	90	17	13	0	139
	Contractor	1	9	1	2	0	13
	Total	120	312	69	46	2	549
	2	Active Duty	60	138	58	20	2

Child	Status	DoDEA	Public	Private	Homeschooled	Online Public School	Total Responses
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	2	3	2	0	0	7
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	2	1	3	1	0	7
	Civilian	9	46	8	11	0	74
	Contractor	1	4	0	2	0	7
	Total	74	192	71	34	2	373

Child	Status	DoDEA	Public	Private	Homeschooled	Online Public School	Total Responses
3	Active Duty	17	28	11	10	1	67
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	1	1	1	0	0	3
	Civilian	1	11	3	6	1	22
	Contractor	0	1	0	1	0	2
	Total	19	41	16	17	2	95
4	Active Duty	4	7	2	6	1	20
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Civilian	0	1	1	2	0	4
	Contractor	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	5	8	3	8	1	25
5	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Civilian	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Contractor	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	3	0	5	1	10
6	Active Duty	3	0	0	2	0	5

Child	Status	DoDEA	Public	Private	Homeschooled	Online Public School	Total Responses
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Civilian	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Contractor	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	3	0	0	2	0	5
	TOTALS	<i>n</i> 222	556	159	112	8	1057
		% 21.00%	52.60%	15.04%	10.60%	0.76%	100%

Respondents reported that their children ($n = 1,073$) were enrolled throughout the Montgomery River Region school districts in 2019-2020: Autauga County ($n = 245, 22.83\%$), Elmore County ($n = 62, 5.78\%$), Montgomery County ($n = 212, 19.76\%$), or Pike Road ($n = 63, 5.87\%$). If their children were not enrolled in one of the four public school districts, they were asked to select DoDEA, Homeschool or Other. There were other public schools, outside the Montgomery River Region: 5 (.46%) Auburn City Schools and 1 (.09%) in Jefferson County. Both of these school systems are over a one-hour commute to Maxwell-Gunter AFB. There were 218 (20.31%) were enrolled in DoDEA (Maxwell Elementary and Middle School (MEMS)), 120 (11.18%) enrolled private schools and 115 (10.72%) enrolled in a homeschool setting (See Table 4).

Table 4***Number of Maxwell-Gunter AFB Personnel's Children by School District***

Child	DoDEA	Homeschool	Autauga County	Elmore County	Montgomery County	Pike Road	Auburn City	Jefferson County	Online	Out-of-State	Private	Total
1	120	46	129	33	119	28	2	1	2	14	70	564
2	73	36	92	20	75	26	1	0	1	10	39	373
3	19	18	22	5	11	8	1	0	0	2	10	96
4	5	8	2	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	25
5	1	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	10
6	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	218	115	245	62	212	63	5	1	5	27	120	1073
	20.31%	10.72%	22.83%	5.78%	19.76%	5.87%	0.46%	0.09%	0.47%	2.52%	11.18%	

When comparing the percentages of types of school settings in which Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel enrolled their children prior to PCS and after PCS, there appear to be some slight differences. Respondents reported a 6.14% decrease in public school enrollment and a 3.2% decrease in private school enrollment. There was also an increase in enrollment in DoDEA (7.55%), Homeschooling (2.68%), and online (.46%) after PCS to Maxwell-Gunter AFB (See Table 5).

Table 5

Change in Percentage of Reported Enrollment Based on School Type

Type of School Setting	% Enrolled Prior to PCS	% Enrolled After to PCS	Difference
Public School Enrollment	58.74	52.60	6.14
Private School	18.24	15.04	3.2
DoDEA	13.45	21	7.55
Homeschooling	7.92	10.60	2.68
Online	.30	.76	0.46

The Panorama’s *School Fit Scale* (Bahena et. al., 2016) is comprised of seven items that are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents reported their perception of each child’s ($n = 1,073$) school fit from youngest to oldest (See Table 6). Child One’s mean scores to each of the items on the *School Fit Scale* ranged from 3.83 ($SD = 1.235$) on *Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school* to 3.40 ($SD = 1.278$) on *How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests*. Child Two’s mean scores to each of the items on the *School Fit Scale* ranged from 3.77 ($SD = 1.280$) on *Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school* to 3.39 ($SD = 1.359$) on *How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests*. Child Three’s mean scores to each of the scale items ranged from 3.84 ($SD = 1.292$) on *At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child* to 3.58 ($SD = 1.412$) on *How well do the activities*

offered at your child's school match his/her interests. Child Four's mean scores to each of the scale items ranged from 4.24 ($SD = 1.268$) on *How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school* to 3.92 ($SD = 1.288$) on *Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school*. Child Five's mean scores to each of the scale items ranged from 4.10 ($SD = 1.287$) on *At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child* to 3.7 ($SD = 1.337$) on *How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school* and 3.7 ($SD = 1.567$) on *How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests*. Child Six's mean scores to each of the scale items ranged from 3.40 ($SD = 1.817$) on *Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school* to 2.60 ($SD = 1.673$) on *How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year*.

Table 6

Maxwell-Gunter AFB Personnel's Perception of School Fit for Each Child Reported

Child	Perception of School Fit for Each Child	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	564	3.62	1.239
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.79	1.181
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		3.73	1.194
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		3.83	1.235
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.40	1.278
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		3.63	1.243
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		3.57	1.226

Child	Perception of School Fit for Each Child	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	373	3.52	1.363
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.69	1.267
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		3.68	1.280
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		3.77	1.280
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.39	1.359
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		3.55	1.308
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		3.48	1.345
3	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	96	3.77	1.373
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.68	1.395
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		3.84	1.292
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		3.78	1.488
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.58	1.412
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		3.60	1.388
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		3.67	1.449
4	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	25	4.24	1.268
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.96	1.274
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		4.28	1.061
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		4.00	1.555
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.92	1.288
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		4.20	1.155
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		4.00	1.323
5	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	10	3.80	1.619
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.70	1.567
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		4.10	1.287
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		3.90	1.663
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.70	1.337
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		3.80	1.619
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		3.90	1.595

Child	Perception of School Fit for Each Child	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6	How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	5	2.60	1.673
	How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?		3.20	1.643
	At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?		3.20	1.483
	Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?		3.40	1.817
	How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?		3.00	1.581
	How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?		2.80	1.789
	How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?		2.80	1.789

Respondents were then asked to complete the 14 item Factors Influencing School Choice, a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: *unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important*. Item 36, *When determining whether to move your family or in selecting where to live in the Montgomery River Region, please indicate the level of importance the following educational factors contributed to your family's decision*. Maxwell-Gunter personnel's mean level of agreement with the *Factors Influencing School Choice* indicated that each factor was *moderately important to important*. Respondents' mean level of agreement indicated there are three factors deemed as more important in selecting a school in the Montgomery River Region: *Good Teachers* ($M = 4.82, SD = .560$), *School Safety* ($M = 4.81, SD = .587$) and *Curriculum/Academics* ($M = 4.76, SD = .602$) The respondents mean scores indicated *Athletic Extracurricular Activities* ($M = 3.08, SD = 1.347$) and *Special Education Services* ($M = 3.10, SD = 1.581$) were the least important factors influencing their school choice. For descriptive statistics of factor influencing school choice, see Table 7.

Table 7***Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing School Choice (n = 304)***

Factors Influencing School Choice	M	SD
Good Teachers	4.82	.560
Curriculum/Academics	4.76	.602
School Safety	4.81	.587
Test Scores	4.16	.897
Academic Growth Rates	4.26	.876
Distance From Your Home	3.66	1.147
Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities	3.42	1.205
Athletic Extracurricular Activities	3.08	1.347
Opinions of Other Parents	3.52	1.183
Principal Leadership	4.11	.964
Discipline-Enforced	4.07	.935
Cleanliness - Upkeep of School	4.29	.873
Special Education Services	3.10	1.581
Graduation Rates	4.14	1.205

When determining how to assess school choice options within the Montgomery River Region prior to PCS to Maxwell-Gunter AFB, personnel responded to Item 37, *When determining your school options, please indicate how important the following forms of information were in your family's decision making* Informational Forms scale employed a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: *unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important*, of various mediums to determine how Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel obtained information about schools in the Montgomery River Region. Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel considered *Discussions with Other Service Members Who Were Stationed in the Montgomery River Region* as the most important informational source ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.088$). The Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel considered *Local News Sites* ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.381$) or *Local School Board Sites* ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.338$) as less important forms of information when determining their school options (See Table 8).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Informational Forms Used in Selecting School Choice Options

Informational Forms	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Great School Website	461	3.38	1.295
Alabama State Department of Education Reports	453	3.81	1.239
Discussions with Other Service Members Who Were Stationed in the Montgomery River Region	457	4.20	1.088
Local School Board Websites	443	2.78	1.338
Visits to the School	435	4.03	1.173
Local News Websites	430	2.71	1.381
Spousal Facebook Pages	432	3.00	1.479

Item 37, *Informational Forms* scale also allowed respondents to list additional sources of information to determine their school options in the Montgomery River Region. Additional sources of information provided by the respondents were the following: *Journey Magazine*, *Parent Magazine*, *Realtor*, *Maxwell-Gunter's School Liaison*, *national test scores*, and *DoDEA's website*.

Research Question 2:

What factors influenced Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette?

The study also explored the number of geographical bachelors and bachelorettes as well as the factors that contributed to their decision to PCS without their families. There were 552 respondents to Item 34, *As Maxwell-Gunter personnel, are you in the Montgomery River Region as a Geographical Bachelor or Geographical Bachelorette (meaning your spouse and/or children did not PCS with you)*. Of the 552 respondents, 27 (4.89%) were at Maxwell-Gunter AFB as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette. Of those 27 respondents, 19 (70.37%) were

Active Duty, 1 (3.70%) Guard and Reserve on Title 10 Orders, and 7 (25.92%) were Civilian personnel.

The Factors Contributing to PCS as a Geographical Bachelor or Bachelorette scale employed a five-point Likert scale measuring level of importance: unimportant, slightly important, moderately important, important, and highly important. The respondents indicated that My Children's Enrollment in School ($M = 4.81$, $SD = .750$) and My Perception of the Quality of Educational Opportunities in the Montgomery River Region ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .985$) were the most important factors considered by the Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel. My Spouse's Continuance of Medical Care ($M = 1.56$, $SD = 1.333$) and My VA Home Loan Status ($M = 1.33$, $SD = 1.000$) were the least important factors influencing Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette. Interestingly, Length of Assignment ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.480$) was slightly important to moderately important. (See Table 9).

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing Maxwell-Gunter Personnel's Decision to PCS as a Geographical Bachelor or Bachelorette (GBB)

Factors Influencing GBB	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Length of Assignment	17	2.76	1.480
My Spouse's Employment	14	3.93	1.385
My Spouse's Enrollment in an In-Resident Educational Program	8	2.00	1.604
My Children's Enrollment in School	16	4.81	0.750
My Perception of the Quality of Educational Opportunities in the Montgomery River Region.	17	4.71	0.985
My VA Home Loan Status	9	1.33	1.000
My Spouse's Continuance of Medical Care	9	1.56	1.333
My Child's Continuance of Medical Care	13	3.15	2.075

Item 34, As Maxwell-Gunter personnel, are you in the Montgomery River Region as a Geographical Bachelor or Geographical Bachelorette (meaning your spouse and/or children did not PCS with you) also allowed respondents to provide additional factors that influenced their families' decision for him or her to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette. There were two additional factors not listed on the scale: lack of autism services such as applied behavioral analysis (ABA) (one comment) and the lack of the family's desire to move (one comment).

Research Question 3:

Is there a significant difference between personnel statuses in the probability of their children attending one of the five school choice courses of action under consideration at Maxwell-Gunter?

- a. If so, is there a significant difference in how the various personnel statuses viewed the importance of factors influencing their response to one of the five courses of action?*
- b. What additional benefits or areas of concern, from its personnel would senior leaders need to consider in determining additional school choices?*

To explore various courses of action (COAs), respondents completed the Courses of Action Under Consideration scale, a five-point Likert scale: not at all probable, somewhat improbable, neutral, somewhat probable; and very probable. The level of agreement mean scores ranged from 2.24 (SD = 1.70), COA 2 (on-base public charter) to 3.90 (SD = 1.47), COA 5 (on-base 9-12 DoDEA School available to off-base personnel). Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel mean level of agreement indicted that COA 2, expanding enrollment in MEMS, (M = 3.87, SD = 1.48) and COA 5, a 9-12 DoDEA on-base school open to off-base residents, (M = 3.90, SD =

1.47) are most probable for enrollment of their children. See Table 10 for descriptive statistics of the courses of action under consideration.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of the School Option Courses of Action Under Consideration at Maxwell-Gunter AFB and Personnel's Probability of Enrollment

COA	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1) My child attending Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS), K-8 which would NOT require on-base housing	428	3.87	1.48
2) My child attending an on-base public 9-12 charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) which would require on-base housing	337	2.24	1.59
3) My child attending an on-base public 9-12 charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) which would NOT require on-base housing	335	3.28	1.64
4) My child attending an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with athletics) which would require on-base housing.	319	2.57	1.71
5) My child attending an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with athletics) which would NOT require on-base housing.	319	3.90	1.47

A non-parametric analysis, Kruskal-Wallis, was performed to determine if a significance difference existed between the five groups in selecting one of the five courses of action. There was a statistically significant difference, at the .05 level, between the groups ($H(4) = 12.960, p = .011$). The pairwise comparisons revealed the statistical significance occurred between the Civilians and Active Duty ($p = .001$) and Civilians and Guard and Reserve on Title 10 ($p = .021$).

To better understand this significant finding, each COA's response distribution by personnel status and number of children was reviewed. Responses were divided into two bins of *Improbable* (*not at all probable* and *somewhat improbable* combined) and *Probable* (*somewhat probable* and *very probable* combined). *COA 1*, expanding MEMS enrollment to off-base active duty personnel, there were 867 children reported. There were 575 (66%) respondents who indicated a *Probable* response with 424 (49%) Active Duty. Twenty-one percent ($n = 186$) of the responses were *Improbable*. *COA 2*, a 9-12 public charter school requiring on-base housing had

691 total children reported. *COA 2* appeared less *Probable* ($n = 180, 26\%$) across respondents as compared to *Improbable* ($n = 441, 64\%$). There were 689 respondents to *COA 3*, a 9-12 public charter school that would not require on-base housing. Fifty-four percent ($n = 373$) indicated it was *Probable* that their children would attend while 34% ($n = 235$) indicated it was *Improbable* that their children would attend. When comparing Active Duty personnel to the overall responses, Active Duty personnel were not as favorable to this COA (36% ($n = 248$) *Probable*; 24% ($n = 165$) *Improbable*). There were 655 respondents to *COA 4*, 9-12 DoDEA school requiring on-base housing. Thirty-five percent ($n = 229$) indicated it was *Probable* that their children would attend while 54% ($n = 356$) indicated it was *Improbable* that their children would attend. Active Duty personnel were less likely to enroll in *COA 4*, 27% ($n = 180$) *Probable* and 33% ($n = 217$) *Improbable*. There were 655 respondents to *COA 5*, 9-12 DoDEA school not requiring on-base housing. Seventy percent ($n = 458$) indicated it is *Probable* that their children would attend while 19% ($n = 124$) indicated it was *Improbable* that their children would attend. Active Duty personnel's responses mirrored the overall response distribution between the two bins, 47% ($n = 310$) *Probable* and 13% ($n = 84$) *Improbable*. See Table 11 for the response distribution by Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel status and number of children reported.

Table 11

Response Distribution of Level of Agreement with Each Courses of Action by Maxwell-Gunter AFB Personnel Status and Number of Children Reported

COA	Status	Response Distribution					Total
		Not at All Probable	Somewhat Improbable	Neutral	Somewhat Probable	Very Probable	
COA 1	Active Duty	119	30	67	112	312	640
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	2	15	17
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	0	0	3	2	12	17
	Civilian	28	4	34	27	85	178
	Contractor	5	0	2	1	7	15
	Total	152	34	106	144	431	867
	COA 2	Active Duty	249	41	44	44	96
Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders		8	0	3	0	4	15
Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders		11	3	0	0	4	18
Civilian		111	8	20	12	16	167
Contractor		7	3	3	1	3	17
Total		386	55	70	57	123	691
COA 3		Active Duty	128	37	53	97	151
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	2	0	0	5	8	15
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	5	1	0	5	7	18
	Civilian	52	6	25	36	54	173
	Contractor	4	0	3	3	7	17
	Total	191	44	81	146	227	689

COA	Status	Response Distribution					Total
		Not at All Probable	Somewhat Improbable	Neutral	Somewhat Probable	Very Probable	
COA 4	Active Duty	190	27	44	34	146	441
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	6	0	2	1	4	13
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	9	3	0	2	4	18
	Civilian	101	11	21	13	20	166
	Contractor	6	3	3	0	5	17
	Total	312	44	70	50	179	655
COA 5	Active Duty	73	11	47	90	220	441
	Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	0	0	0	3	10	13
	Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	3	1	3	0	11	18
	Civilian	28	4	23	33	78	166
	Contractor	1	3	0	2	11	17
	Total	105	19	73	128	330	655

It should be noted that across all the COAs, 59 (7.7%) to 144 (18.7%) of respondents indicated they would not have a child within the respective age range in the 2020-2021 school year (see Table 12).

Table 12

Total Number of Maxwell Gunter AFB Personnel Indicating the COA was Not Applicable as they Would Have No Children in the Age Range in the 2020-2021 School Year (n = 769)

COA	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
COA 1	59	7.7
COA 2	150	19.5
COA 3	152	19.8
COA 4	144	18.7
COA 5	144	18.7

The study sought to identify factors inherent to some of the COAs, as well as other common factors influencing parental behavior regarding school choice. Respondents completed the *Factors That May Influence Response to a COA* scale, measuring the level of importance on a five-point Likert scale (*not at all important; slightly important, moderately important, very important and extremely important*) to the following factors: special education services, transportation, before school care, after school care, quality of on-base housing, lack of non-athletic extracurricular activities, lack of athletic extracurricular activities, or other. The *Quality of the On-Base Housing* was *slightly important to moderately important* ($M = 2.75, SD = 1.63$), while *Special Education Services* ($M = 3.78, SD = 1.48$) and *Before School Care* ($M = 3.69, SD = 1.53$) were *moderately important to very important*. See Table 13 for the descriptive statistics of factors influencing responses to COAs.

Table 13***Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing Maxwell Gunter AFB Personnel's Response to a Courses of Action (COA) (n = 487)***

Consideration	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Special Education Services	3.78	1.48
Transportation	3.12	1.42
Before School Care	3.69	1.53
After School Care	3.43	1.60
Quality of On-Base Housing	2.75	1.63
Lack of Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities	3.09	1.32
Lack of Athletic Extracurricular Activities	3.21	1.37

The seven items for consideration, when responding to the COA choices, were transformed into one construct called *Considerations*. Using this construct, A Kruskal-Wallis, was performed to determine if a significance difference between the five groups in selecting one of the five courses of action. There was a statistically significant difference, at the .05 level, between the groups ($H(4) = 12.443, p = .014$). The pairwise comparisons revealed the statistical significance occurred between the Civilians and Active Duty ($p = .001$). Active Duty personnel perceived the considerations more *moderately important* ($M = 3.21, SD = .841$) and Civilians perceived them *moderately important to very important* ($M = 3.55, SD = .849$) (See Table 14).

Table 14***Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing Maxwell Gunter AFB Personnel's Response to a Courses of Action (COA) by Personnel Status (n = 487)***

Personnel Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Active Duty	3.21	.841
Guard Reserve with Title 10	3.38	.706
Guard Reserve without Title 10	3.54	.618
Civilian	3.55	.849
Contractor	3.16	1.16

Additionally, in response to Item 39, *In Considering your interest in the proposed school-settings, how important were the following in your decision*, respondents could have selected

Other as an item for consideration. Respondents were asked to list any other factor deemed important that was not previously included. There were 118 *Other* responses. Of those *Other* responses, 45 (38%) stated they had no additional considerations in determining a response to one of the five COAs. *Other* responses were reported in short phrases. The two primary *Other* responses reported in their consideration of one of the five COAs were *Curriculum-related* ($n = 12, 10\%$) such as Advanced Placement, honor courses, theater program, and gifted programs. Examples of comments are as follows: *Honors Courses; Gifted and STEM*. The second *Other* response theme listed in their consideration of the five COAs was *Safety* ($n = 11, 9\%$); for example, *Safety - no shootings; discipline enforced*. Other factors that respondents considered when determining a response to one of the five COAs were the following: *technology, quality and stability of faculty, accountability, distrust of charter schools, the quality of housing in areas adjacent to the base, lunch options, core values, class size, and diversity*.

To conclude the survey, respondents completed 10 open-ended questions, seeking additional information about benefits and areas of concern for each COA under consideration. There were 391 responses to Item 40, *If Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS) (assuming all other eligibility requirements are met) was opened to those living off base, what would the benefits be to your family*. Of the 391 respondents, 62 (16%) indicated that the expansion of MEMS to off-base residents would have no benefit to their family, and offered no comments on its benefits. Further, there were 37 (9%) who indicated that the question was not applicable given their circumstances. And, finally, 29 (7%) of respondents indicated that expanding MEMS to off-base residents is of no benefit to them, as they are pleased with their children's current school setting.

There were thematic categories that arose from the responses. First, respondents viewed *Quality* (113 comments) as being a benefit to their student(s). Overall, the respondents perceived Maxwell Elementary and Middle School (MEMS) as having higher standards than current public education options in the River Region. Specifically, respondents reported a higher perception of teacher and curricular quality. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *They would receive a far superior education so they can compete with their peers once*
- *They leave Alabama, otherwise they will be academically behind for the foreseeable future.*
- *Higher quality teachers with more accelerated curriculum*

The second theme was *Housing* (56 comments). Respondents viewed the flexibility of opening MEMS to off-based active duty members as beneficial. Those who are currently living on base had a negative sentiment toward on-base housing choices. Respondents viewed Maxwell-Gunter housing as in need of repairs. For those currently living off base, there was a positive sentiment attached to their responses. Respondents stated that having this school choice added flexibility to their current accommodations. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *The main reason why I live on base is so my children can attend MEMS. If living on base wouldn't be a requirement, that would allow us to buy a house that actually fits our family's needs.*
- *I'd be able to live off base in a home with far less housing maintenance requirements*
- *I recently moved on base just to get my kids away from Alabama public schools.*

A third theme that had an overall positive sentiment was *Logistics* (60 comments). Respondents believed that this school choice added value to their operational time, as well as benefiting the overall stability of their homes. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *This would be amazing if my child could attend Maxwell Elementary Middle School. My family would definitely [sic] benefit from this when my husband is on/TDY working a mission at times it's hard when you are working on base and you are having to worry about going across town to pick your child up or if they close school early. The thought of having my child here on base with me would definitely make our lives easier all the way around. It would also make deployments easier when your spouse is gone. I also think it would make it to were we as parents would be able to attend more school functions and after school activities as well. Maxwell Elementary Middle School has so much to offer these children and keep them pushing forward.*
- *An option that is closer to work and where the travel required for school [sic] functions is minimized if I am working on base.*

A fourth theme, *Safety* (53 comments) had a positive sentiment attached. Respondents stated this additional on-base school choice would provide a greater sense of security.

Respondents perceived a lack of safety and security within public schools in the Montgomery River Region. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Would give families an option to get away from MPS and know that there is an avenue to address concerns through the base. Would also give a better feeling that kids are safe since MPS offers little to know sense of security in our school.*
- *My child would be taught in a safer environment with teachers who are of quality there for growth of the child and not just a paycheck. I personally stayed out of Montgomery so that my child would be able to attend Elmore county schools as base housing is not good.*

After the fourth larger theme, the topics had a visible breaking point; for example, *Peer Support* for their children was mentioned positively in 35 comments, *Saving Private School Tuition* was mentioned in 27 comments, and *Diversity* was mentioned in 14 comments. One comment example from each of these themes are as follows:

- *Shared experience/background of my child's school peer group*
- *I would not have to pay \$14,000 a year to send my son to a private school to ensure he is getting a quality education.*

- *My child will have an opportunity to return to a diverse educational setting that embraces him as a military child.*

There were 405 responses to the open-ended question, Item 41, If Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS) (assuming all other eligibility requirements are met) was opened to those living off base, what concerns your family. Of the respondents, 26% (n = 104) reported they had no concerns with expanding MEMS eligibility to off-base residents, 10% (n = 41) reported this option would not be applicable to them, and an additional 2% (n = 8) reported they would not change their current setting. Of the remaining respondents, there were five primary thematic categories within the comments: Overcrowding (93 comments), Transportation (50 comments), Quality (46 comments), Application (27 comments), and Before/After School Care (23 comments). Respondents were concerned with MEMS capacity and resources to handle a high influx in the student population. Quality was often tied to Overcrowding, as respondents perceived higher student-to-teacher ratios would decrease the quality of instruction present at MEMS. Overcrowding would also increase the demand for qualified teachers. MEMS resourcing would need to align quickly to the student influx to on-board teachers and address infrastructure needs. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *The teacher to student ratio would grow. Overcrowding of school. Less individualized attention.*
- *Would the classes be too full? 4th and 5th grade are currently combined because there aren't enough teachers.*

Transportation was viewed as being vital to the course of action sustainability. For those who chose to live in areas such as the Town of Pike Road or Autauga County, the length and drive time of the commute are viewed negatively. Many of the transportation issues were related to *Before/After School Care*. Respondents were concerned about meeting their arrival time at

work and assuring their children were cared for until their release. Several personnel were concerned about the eligibility of the Maxwell Youth Center and its alignment to this COA.

Examples of comments are as follow:

- *Compatibility for driving distance for my wife. We committed to live off base near our children's school when we moved here. To now move 1 kid on base with the others so far away would not make sense for us.*
- *If we enrolled them, it would be a somewhat long commute for my kids, and I'd have to adjust my work schedule to drop them off and pick them up each day.*
- *My only concern would be making accomadations [sic] to get my child from gunter to maxwell [sic].*
- *initial transportation to and from school. bus systems to off base neighborhoods? or all parental transport?*

Finally, the theme of *Application* (27 comments) arose. Respondents were concerned about how the application policy and process for the MEMS expansion would be executed.

Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Getting my kids a slot to the school*
- *Depends on if the school is open to military members that reside off base. If the school will be opening to local community, my children still wouldn't go.*

For COA 2, there were 374 respondents to Item 42, If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what would the benefits be to your family. This COA was viewed as not beneficial (n = 239, 69%) to their family or was not applicable given their situation (ages of children or living off-base) with an additional 2% (n = 9) who reported they would not alter their current educational environment. Of the 126 remaining respondents, Quality was the top beneficial theme (45 comments). Respondents viewed a 9-12 on-base charter school as a viable option to the current

public schools available in the Montgomery River Region. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Hopefully better quality education than the local district.*
- *It would be extremely helpful. The quality of education in the local community is horrible and not safe. Not to [sic] concerned with sports or extra-activities.*

There were 23 comments from personnel that viewed this COA as another *Opportunity*, but offered no insight as to its benefit to their family; for example, *Have a possible good school available. Logistics* (19 comments) and *Safety* (19 comments) were viewed positively by the respondents. A new theme of *Family Cohesion* (14 comments) appeared in COA 2 open-ended responses. Respondents stated they would bring their families to the Montgomery River Region and consider an extended tour at Maxwell-Gunter. Additionally, 14 comments mentioned the *Private Tuition Savings* for the respondents. One comment example from each of these themes are as follows:

- *This is a must. We all want our high schoolers on base rather than driving 30+ to get them to prattville or pike road [sic]. Plus- many parents can NOT drive their kids that far due to their jobs. This has to change.*
- *Security! Then convenience with drop-off, pick-up, and work schedules. Assumed to be free tuition.*
- *Would make me more likley [sic] to request to extend my tour here providing more stability to my family*
- *If this were the case, I would not be considering paying \$15K per child in annual tuition to a private school.*

For COA 2, there were 363 respondents to Item 43, If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what concerns your family. Of the 363 respondents, 97 (42%) indicated they had no concerns with COA 2. Some respondents, 122 (34%), indicated no additional comments as the COA

would not be applicable to their family situation and 8 (2%) indicated their student would remain in their current academic environment. Of the remaining, 136 (37.4%) expressed two primary themes. The theme, Lack of Extracurricular Activities (52 comments), had a negative sentiment as respondents viewed extracurricular as co-curricular in nature. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Lack of extracurricular activities would make me unlikely to send my child to this school.*
- *Sports and extracurricular are extremely important to those year groups in terms of college applications.*

The second theme of *On-Base Housing Requirement* (35 comments) had a negative sentiment with respondents indicating a current lack of on-base housing and a lack of interest in being required to live on base. Examples are comments are as follows:

- *That people would have to on base just to go to that school and be stuck w the horrible housing*
- *It wouldnt [sic] be an option for us if we couldn't get a house on base.*

COA 3, was similar to *COA 2* with the exception of allowing off-base residents to attend the public charter school option. There were 352 respondents to Item 44, *If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what would the benefits be to your family.* Of the 352 respondents, 27% ($n = 97$) indicated this *COA* was not applicable to them due to ages of their children and 18% ($n = 65$) indicated this *COA 3* would not be beneficial. Of the remaining 194 respondents, five thematic categories arose from the responses. First, respondents viewed *Quality* (70 comments) as being a benefit to their student(s). Overall, the respondents perceived a charter school as a positive

option having higher standards than the current public education options in the River Region.

Comments were similar to the benefits of COA 2. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *higher quality education availability [sic]*
- *Improved learning experience*

The second theme was *Safety* (30 comments). Respondents indicated a public charter would offer a safer school environment for their 9-12 grade children. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Safer school*
- *Inclusive environment; issues handled; not ran like a prison; 504 honored; a place where my child feels safe*

A third theme with an overall positive sentiment was *Housing Flexibility*. Those who are currently living on base had a negative sentiment toward on-base housing choices, and viewed the flexibility of housing choices positively. For those currently living off base, there was a positive sentiment attached to their responses. Respondents stated that having this school choice added flexibility to their current accommodations. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *We could finally live off base and still send our kids to school on base.*
- *Would allow our high school aged daughter to attend while still maintaining freedom of choice to live in a house that accommodates a larger family, and in a neighborhood that's safe/similar amenities to on base. Allows daughter to more easily connect, socialize and create stronger long term relationships with other military students*

A fourth theme that had an overall positive sentiment was *Saving Private School Tuition* (15 comments).

- *No cost option in contrast to the expensive private schools.*

- *Avoid the cost of private school tuition, which is approx [sic] \$8k per year.*

And, finally, the fifth theme was *Logistics* (14 comments). Respondents believed that this school choice added value to their operational time, as well as benefiting the overall stability of their homes. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *close to home, no need for transportation*
- *close to work, walking distance for on base residents, child safety*

Following the pattern for each COA, respondents completed Item 45, If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what would concern your family. There were 360 respondents to this item. Of the total respondents, 96 (27%) reported no additional concerns as this COA was not applicable to them due to age of children or other reasons, 88 (24%) indicated no concerns with this COA, 6 (2%) stated they would not participate in a charter, and 4 (1%) reported they were happy with their current academic choices. Of the remaining 166, two themes were noted: *Extracurricular Activities and Quality*. *Extracurricular Activities* (52 comments) was the largest theme. Respondents believed extracurricular activities help develop the whole person and expressed a negative sentiment about them being excluded in the COA description. Examples of responses are as follows:

- *Lack of extracurricular activities would make me unlikely to send my child to this school.*
- *no extracurricular activites [sic] or sports. They are imporant [sic] to development.*

Quality (30 comments) was identified as the second largest theme. Respondents indicated they were concerned a public charter would not meet their expectations of quality to include rigor, course offerings, and academic performance. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *I would be concerned about the level education. I would not want to send them for a school year and have to move them again if the education does not meet my expectations.*
- *Classroom size and availability of college prep level courses like AP and advanced academics. High school needs to prepare children for college. Also charters don't have the greatest history of lasting. I'd be concerned it would close sometime in that 4-year period leaving my child to graduate somewhere else.*

COA 4 explored Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel's perceived benefits and concerns of an on-base DoDEA school for on-base residents. There were 335 respondents to Item 46, *If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what would the benefits be to your family.* There were 115 (34%) respondents who indicated this COA was not applicable to their situation, 91 (27%) indicated the COA would be of no benefit, primarily, as it would only benefit on-base residents, and 8 (2%) reported they were happy with their current academic school choice. Of the remaining 121, there were four thematic categories that arose from comments. Respondents viewed *Quality* with a positive sentiment (48 comments). Unlike previous responses to the charter school COAs under consideration, respondents' familiarity with DoDEA schools was apparent. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *SO many! Safe, high level of education, instant connection for the kids all being military, good teachers, the transition from MEMS to the DODS high school would be much more seamless than transitioning to a different school off base.*
- *Excellent Education and safe schools*

Logistics (20 comments) was the second theme cited as a benefit. As in previous responses, respondents expressed a positive sentiment toward the ease of having children on base. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Close to home, extracurricular activities are incredibly important*
- *It would be far more convenient*

Safety (17 comments) was a third theme with a positive sentiment. Respondents expressed a sense of safety and security knowing students would be on Maxwell's campus.

Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Knowing our high schooler would be in a safe environment on base also being surrounded by other military teens who know the struggle of moving frequently*
- *Safe environment to learn, inclusiveness, better oversight, handling situations like racism and sexual harassment*

And, *Family Cohesion* (14 comments), specifically about ease in which assignments to Maxwell would be perceived in the future. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *a safe, high-quality, low-cost option for high schoolers; access to extracurriculars; less hesitation to return to Maxwell AFB in future PCS.*
- *I would consider another assignment here. As it stands, I would turn down orders and retire rather than forcing my family to return to Maxwell.*

In response to *COA 4*, respondents were asked to discuss any additional concerns for their families. There were a total of 327 respondents to Item 47, *If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what concerns your family.* Of the total responses, 105 (32%) had no concerns with *COA 4*, 5 (2%) were satisfied with current academic choice, and 132 (40%) reported no additional concerns as this *COA* was not applicable due to the ages of their children. Of the

remaining 85 respondents *Quality* (19 comments) was the primary theme. Compared to responses of previous COAs, responses involving quality had a slightly different emphasis. Respondents were interested in the hiring of quality secondary education faculty members and the faculty-to-student ratio that would support a quality education. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *DoDEAs ability to hire enough quality teachers to provide a rigorous curriculum for academically advanced students (today the 4th and 5th grades are combined because the population is too small as well as middle school teachers covering multiple grades and subjects - quality and diversity is lacking)*
- *Quality of teachers it could attract.*

The second largest theme of *Housing* (10 comments) was expressed. Respondents who were currently living off-base expressed a lack of desire to return to on-base housing for various reasons. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *The only concern is base housing.*
- *Having to live in subpar base housing*
- *Base housing again. It is awful and needs to be torn down.*

COA 5 explored Maxwell-Gunter personnel's perceived benefits and concerns of an on-base DoDEA school for off-base residents. There were 334 respondents to Item 48, *If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, would the benefits be to your family.* There were 87 (26%) respondents indicating COA 5 was not applicable, 39 (12%) indicating there were no benefits to their families, and 8 (2%) reporting they were happy with their current academic setting. Of the remaining 200 respondents, there was a positive sentiment to COA 5. The thematic codes were

clustered around the *Access to Quality DoDEA Schools* (49 comments). Examples of comments are as follows:

- *Where and when? Where do I sign up?! I am totally on board. :)*
- *YES, I moved off base [sic] to get my kid in a higher school but she misses Maxwell*
- *Would be a great monetary savings from not having to pay private school bills or worry about the magnet school lottery. Transportation concerns would be non-existent. I would be comfortable that he is getting a quality education as I am satisfied with the current DODEA curriculum for middle school. We could have a larger, newer house, with less health concerns than what is available on base.*

Respondents perceived the *Quality* (39 comments) of academic instruction, curriculum, and offerings within a 9-12 DoDEA school opened to off-base residents exceeded that of current school options. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *#1, my child would receive a quality education. #2, see answer above.*
- *My child would get a great education and would excel to the level he needs to be on and beyond. I would have a peace of mind knowing he's safe and in a school that will keep him safe.*

There was a break in the themes by more than 10 comments from the two primary themes; however, comments re-clustered around six themes: *Sense of Community* (22 comments), *Safety* (21 comments), *Tuition Saving* (18 comments), *Family Cohesion* (16 comments), *Logistics* (12 Comments), and *Extracurricular Activities* (12 comments). Comments were similar to previous COA comments.

In response to *COA 5*, respondents were asked to discuss any additional concerns for their families. There were a total of 325 respondents to Item 49, *If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living*

off-base, what would the benefits be to your family. There were 100 (31%) of respondents who expressed no concerns, 73 (22%) offered no additional concerns as the COA was not applicable to their family, and 3 (1%) who were satisfied with their current school option. Of the remaining 149 respondents. *Capacity* (43 comments) was the largest theme that arose from the responses. Respondents expressed concerns with school and class sizes. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *That the school could not accommodate the demand as well as the level of instruction available*
- *Does the base have the right space to accommodate the needs of a good high-school campus?*
- *School being over crowded and an increase in teacher to student ratio*
- *Being a base resident, I am concerned about the capacity of base infrastructure to handle the additional students. I would be concerned about the increased traffic for pick-up and drop-off. The streets and gate access for Maxwell AFB is currently not optimized for an increased traffic pattern to the school. Maxwell would need to consider opening up an additional gate for school traffic that improves the flow of school traffic.*

The second largest theme was *Transportation* (14 comments). Respondents were concerned with transportation needs. Examples of comments are as follows:

- *The time school would start and if there is going to be transportation*
- *Transportation will be an issue as I start work on base at 0600. Next year when my husband graduates AWC, we would have no one to bring our daughter to school on base, as I work in a secure facility and my husband and I will be geographically seperated [sic]. This is a major concern for most spouses of senior officers who have careers of their own on Maxwell AFB, and throughout the AF. Trying to find a safe school with a good track record and reliable transportation is a nightmare in this area. This issue impacts many of us, as the AF continues to force families to make difficult decisions about taking their families with them or offering stability.*

Conclusions

This research explored how Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel perceived education in the Montgomery River Region. First, a description of the respondent's children can be drawn. The vast majority of personnel's children attend traditional public schools (59% all personnel, 58% Active Duty), followed by private schools (18% all personnel, 17% Active Duty), DoDEA (13% all personnel, 17% Active Duty). Other educational options were used much less frequently, including home schooling (8% all personnel, 7% Active Duty), charter schools (1% all personnel, 2% Active Duty), and on-line (less than 1% all personnel and Active Duty).

DoDEA, charter, and on-line are also public schools, meaning that 73% of all children and 77% of Active Duty members' children attend some form of public education. The vast majority of personnel's children attend traditional public schools (59% all personnel, 58% Active Duty), followed by private schools (18% all personnel, 17% Active Duty), DoDEA (13% all personnel, 17% Active Duty). Other educational options were used much less frequently, including home schooling (8% all personnel, 7% Active Duty), charter schools (1% all personnel, 2% AD), and on-line (less than 1% all personnel, and Active Duty). Within the Montgomery River Region public school system, the majority of the respondents' children are enrolled in Autauga County ($n = 245$, 22.83%) and Montgomery County ($n = 212$, 19.76%).

When comparing the school setting prior to PCS and after PCS to Maxwell-Gunter, AFB, personnel slightly altered school choices. Personnel were 6% less likely to enroll their children in traditional public schools and 3% less likely to enroll their children in private schools, compared to their last assignment. Avoiding traditional public schools reflects a lack of confidence in the

quality of local schools. Reductions in private school attendance could be due to the existence of other acceptable options, particularly DoDEA.

DoDEA's attendance in the River Region increased by 8% and home schooling rose by 3%, compared to their last assignment. DoDEA attendance likely reflects both a prior lack of opportunity (Maxwell is the only CONUS AFB with such a school) and familiarity with and/or confidence in this system. Both these increases also appear to have been influenced by negative perceptions of local schools. When considering factors that influenced their school choice decisions, *Good Teachers*, *Curriculum/Academics*, and *School Safety* were most important to the respondents.

Overall, personnel reported they were *Somewhat Satisfied* to *Quite Satisfied* with how well their child's current school meets their developmental needs. Of the seven items comprising the Panorama's *School Fit Scale*, personnel reported cultural background, belonging, and discipline as the strongest. The weakest areas reported by personnel on the *School Fit Scale* were academic preparation, teaching styles, and extracurricular activities.

Personnel indicated that prior to a PCS to the Montgomery River Region they perceived *Discussions with Other Service Members Who Were Stationed in the Montgomery River Region* as the most important. Respondents' other important sources of information were in-person visits to schools and the Alabama State Department of Education. Respondents reported that spousal social media groups and *greatschools.org* were much less important sources of information.

Of the respondents, 4.89% ($n = 19$) elected to PCS to Maxwell-Gunter AFB as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette. When making the decision to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette, *My Child's Enrollment in School* and *My Perception of the Quality of Educational Opportunities in the Montgomery River Region* were the two most important factors. Spousal employment was also reported as an important factor. The length of assignment rated much lower. However, the data did not permit more detailed analysis based on respondents' assignment length.

In considering their level of agreement with each of the K-12 courses of actions under consideration, respondents were most likely to enroll their students in *COA 1* (66%), expanding MEMS enrollment to off-base residents and *COA 5* (70%), an on-base DoDEA 9-12 school open to off-base residents were probable. And, in considering which of the COAs were probable, the respondents considered the *Quality of On-Base Housing*, *Special Education Services*, and *Before School Care* as factors most important to them. The most important factors influencing on base school preference were the perception of higher academic quality, access to special education services for children who require it, and more before and after school care options.

Recommendations for Practice

Course of Actions Under Consideration

The strongest and clearest recommendation these findings support is the expansion of enrollment eligibility at MEMS to include the children of Active Duty personnel who reside off base. The data suggest pursuing a change to 10 USC 2164 as soon as possible, maximizing the facility's student capacity, and transparently planning selection criteria and processes in case there is excessive demand.

Messaging and Communication

Develop comprehensive processes and tools to provide consistent and clear messages to four stakeholder groups: 1) Personnel planning a PCS to Maxwell-Gunter AFB; 2) Montgomery River Region's civic and school leaders; 3) State leaders and legislators; and 4) Secretary of the Air Force, Headquarters Air Force, Department of Defense, and Congress. These tools should provide a single point of reference for information from Maxwell-Gunter. The messaging should include:

- Highlight exemplar public and private schools in the Montgomery River Region. There are some excellent schools in the area, some of which are nationally ranked in academics (e.g., Montgomery magnet schools and Auburn City).
- Highlight exemplar programs in schools in the Montgomery River Region.
- Transfer guidelines and rules for public and private schools.

Dual-Career Families

Develop programs, practices, and processes to support dual-career families.

Recommendations for Future Study

While this study briefly described factors influencing Maxwell-Gunter AFB personnel's decision to PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette, further exploration with AFPC should occur. This study should aid in the understanding the factors and differences of those who chose declination without judgement and those who chose PCS as a geographical bachelor or bachelorette.

In addition, a follow-on study, once leadership has selected and implemented a course of action, could help assess effectiveness and changes in attitudes towards local K-12 options.

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Appendix A: Human Subjects Research IRB Determination



Not Research & Not Human Subject Research IR Review Checklist

For AFRL IRB Use Only			
PI Name:	Jendia Grissett	Protocol Number:	FWR20200058N v1.00
Protocol Title:	K-12 School Options		

IRB Determination	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The activity does not meet the definition of "research" under the Common Rule (32 CFR 219).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The activity is research but does not involve "human subjects" under the Common Rule (32 CFR 219).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The activity is research involving Human Subjects under the common rule (32 CFR 219).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The activity involves use of protected health information (PHI) for research purposes
<input type="checkbox"/>	The activity appears to be subject to FDA regulations.

IRB Member Submission Analysis
<p>A survey will be sent to Maxwell-Gunter personnel to obtain participants' perception of the current school options in the Montgomery River Region and potential K-12 school options that Air University could seek for its personnel. The questions are designed to obtain perceptions of K-12 school issues surrounding Maxwell-Gunter as a PCS. The data will be used to determine if Air University has a demand signal to continue its advocacy for its personnel in regard to K-12 school options. Completion of the survey indicates the participants' willingness to engage in the survey. A pilot of 30 individuals will be conducted to establish the reliability of the survey instrument. The survey will be administered using Qualtrics approved survey system through Air University's A6. Data will be stored within Qualtrics under the project manager's account and will be exported to SPSS on a government computer for analysis. Data and analysis will be presented to Air University's leadership in report form. This activity is not generalizable beyond the programmatic evaluation and customer service stated mission and as such constitutes quality improvement and operational programmatic improvement activity, not research under the Common Rule. No further IRB review is required.</p>

AFRL IRB Signature	
ALLEN.RHONDA.COLLEEN EN.1395901547 <div style="font-size: small; margin-left: 100px;"> Digitally signed by ALLEN.RHONDA.COLLEEN.1395901547 Date: 2020.01.27 17:33:13 -05'00' </div>	Click or tap to enter a date.
IRB Reviewer	Date
Note: To sign this form electronically, please save it as a PDF and follow these instructions .	

**Appendix B: Grade Level and Number of Children Reported by Personnel Status at
Maxwell-Gunter AFB**

Active Duty

Grade Level	1st	2nd	3 rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total Number of Children
Pre K	100	5	2	1	1	0	0	109
K	81	18	0	0	0	0	0	99
1st	46	33	0	0	0	1	0	80
2nd	33	34	2	1	0	0	0	70
3rd	37	32	10	0	0	0	0	79
4th	28	32	3	2	0	0	0	65
5th	26	23	7	2	0	0	0	58
6th	17	19	10	2	2	0	0	50
7th	16	20	10	2	0	0	0	48
8th	12	22	5	1	1	1	0	42
9th	10	22	5	6	3	0	0	46
10th	9	7	3	2	0	1	0	22
11th	10	6	9	1	1	1	0	28
12th	3	11	1	1	1	1	0	18
Total	428	284	67	21	9	5	0	814

Guard and Reserve Title 10

Grade Level	1st	2nd	3 rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total Number of Children
Pre K	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
K	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
1st	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
2nd	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
3rd	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
4th	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
5th	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
6th	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
7th	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
8th	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9th	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11th	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
12 th	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	14	7	1	0	0	0	0	22

Guard and Reserve NOT Title 10

Grade Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total Number of Children
Pre K	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
K	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
3rd	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
4th	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
5th	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
6th	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
7th	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
8th	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
9th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10th	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
11th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	7	3	1	0	0	0	23

Civilian

Grade Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total Number of Children
Pre K	29	2	0	0	0	0	0	31
K	16	3	0	0	0	0	0	19
1st	18	8	0	0	0	0	0	26
2nd	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	13
3rd	9	7	2	0	0	0	0	18
4th	8	8	0	1	0	0	0	17
5th	10	6	4	0	0	0	0	20
6th	10	5	2	0	1	0	0	18
7th	4	7	2	1	0	0	0	14
8th	8	5	1	0	0	0	0	14
9th	10	5	4	0	0	0	0	19
10th	8	4	2	1	0	0	0	15
11th	7	7	1	0	0	0	0	15
12 th	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	14
Total	151	76	22	3	1	0	0	253

Contractor

Grade Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total Number of Children
Pre K	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
K	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
3rd	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
4th	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
5th	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
6th	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8th	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
9th	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
10th	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
11th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	7	2	0	0	0	0	26

Appendix C: K-12 School Options Survey



K-12 SCHOOL OPTIONS

Air University Survey Control Number: 20200116AUCC

Privacy Act Statement

Authority: 10 U.S.C.; 8013, SECAF

Purpose: This is a short, official Air University survey to provide the leadership with information on the demand for K-12 school options. The survey can be completed in approximately 10 – 15 minutes. The information you provide will be kept confidential. Any identifying information submitted will be removed prior to presenting survey findings to Air University leadership.

Routine Uses: Data obtained from this survey will be used for planning K-12 school options for Air University's personnel.

Disclosure: Providing information in this survey is voluntary. Individual survey responses with identifying information will NOT be shared. The survey results are reported only in a manner that does not identify an individual.

Please take 15 minutes to complete the “K-12 School Options Survey.” Your answers will help us understand where our military children attend school, how well their current schools fit your needs, how families select schools before they PCS, and which new school options would most benefit our community.

All personnel (Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, and Civilians) assigned to Maxwell AFB or Gunter Annex are encouraged to complete the survey. If you are married or have a significant other, please take this survey with him/her, as each family may only complete ONE survey.

Additionally, if you and your spouse both serve at Maxwell-Gunter, select the role (Question 1) that you will use to complete the survey. For example, if you are Active Duty and your spouse is a GS employee, decide which one of you will be completing the survey on behalf of your family, and answer all subsequent questions from the perspective of that role, as each family may only complete ONE survey.

Q1 Please indicate your status at Maxwell-Gunter AFB.

Active Duty	Civilian
Guard/Reserve on Title 10 Orders	Contractor
Guard/Reserve NOT on Title 10 Orders	

Q2 Do you have preschool (K-3/K-4) or school aged children (K-12):

No (taken to end of the survey)	Yes
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Q3 Prior to receiving orders to Maxwell-Gunter AFB, please indicate the type of school your children were enrolled: [Mark all that apply.]

<input type="checkbox"/> Public School	<input type="checkbox"/> Charter School
<input type="checkbox"/> Private School	<input type="checkbox"/> DoDEA School (on-base school)
<input type="checkbox"/> Homeschooled	<input type="checkbox"/> Online Public School

Q4 Please select your youngest child's grade level grade-level during the 2019-2020 academic:

Pre-Kindergarten	6th
Kindergarten	7th
1st	8th
2nd	9th
3rd	10th
4th	11th
5th	12th

Q5 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)	Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)
Public School	State Approved Online Public School
Private School	

Q6 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

- Homeschooled Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

- Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level) Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

- Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka) DoDEA (on-base school)

- Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q7 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q8 Do you have a second school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q9 Please indicate the grade-level for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

Pre-Kindergarten

6th

Kindergarten

7th

1st

8th

2nd

9th

3rd

10th

4th

11th

5th

12th

Q10 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)

Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)

Public School

State Approved Online Public School

Private School

Q11 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

Homeschooled

Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level)

Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka)

DoDEA (on-base school)

Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q12 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q13 Do you have a third school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q14 Please indicate the grade-level of this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

Pre-Kindergarten

6th

Kindergarten

7th

1st

8th

2nd

9th

3rd

10th

4th

11th

5th

12th

Q15 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)

Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)

Public School

State Approved Online Public School

Private School

Q16 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

Homeschooled

Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level)

Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka)

DoDEA (on-base school)

Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q17 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q18 Do you have a fourth school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q19 Please indicate the grade-level of this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

Pre-Kindergarten

6th

Kindergarten

7th

1st

8th

2nd

9th

3rd

10th

4th

11th

5th

12th

Q20 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)

Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)

Public School

State Approved Online Public School

Private School

Q21 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

Homeschooled

Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level)

Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka)

DoDEA (on-base school)

Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q22 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q23 Do you have a fifth school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q24 Please indicate the grade-level of this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

Pre-Kindergarten

6th

Kindergarten

7th

1st

8th

2nd

9th

3rd

10th

4th

11th

5th

12th

Q25 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)

Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)

Public School

State Approved Online Public School

Private School

Q26 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

Homeschooled

Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level)

Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka)

DoDEA (on-base school)

Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q27 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q28 Do you have a sixth school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q29 Please indicate the grade-level of this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

Pre-Kindergarten

6th

Kindergarten

7th

1st

8th

2nd

9th

3rd

10th

4th

11th

5th

12th

Q30 Please indicate the school setting for this child during the 2019-2020 academic year:

DoDEA School (on-base school)

Homeschool (under a local Homeschool Umbrella)

Public School

State Approved Online Public School

Private School

Q31 Please indicate the name of the school district in which this child is enrolled:

Homeschooled

Pike Road School (Pike Road Elem, Middle, or High School)

Autauga County (such as Prattville schools, Autaugaville, Billingsly, Marbury, or Pine Level)

Child is not enrolled in the Montgomery River Region. Please indicate where enrolled:

Elmore County (such as Elmore Schools, Airport Road, Coosada, Eclectic Elem, Eclectic Middle, Holtville, Millbrook Elem, Millbrook Middle, Redland Road, or Stanhope, Wetumpka)

DoDEA (on-base school)

Montgomery County (such as Baldwin, Bear, Blount, Booker T Washington, Brewbaker, Carr, Carver, Dalraida, Forrest Avenue, JD, Lamp, Loveless, or Winton Blount)

Q32 Please indicate your perception of how well the school matches this child's developmental needs:

	1	2	3	4	5
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No Belonging at All	Slight Belonging	Some Belonging	Quite a Bit of Belonging	Tremendous Belonging
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not Comfortable at All	Slightly Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Quite Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not Well at All	Slightly Well	Somewhat Well	Quite Well	Extremely Well

Q33 Do you have a seventh school-aged child?

No

Yes

Q34 As Maxwell-Gunter personnel, are you in the Montgomery River Region as a Geographical Bachelor or Geographical Bachelorette (meaning your spouse and/or children did not PCS with you)?

No

Yes

Q35 Please indicate how important the following factors contributed to your family's decision for you to PCS as a Geographical Bachelor or Bachelorette.

	Unimportant	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Highly Important	Not Applicable
My spouse's employment						
My spouse's enrollment in an in-resident educational program						
My children's enrollment in school						
My perception of the quality of educational opportunities in the Montgomery River Region.						
My VA home loan status						
My spouse's continuance of *medical care						
My child's continuance of medical care						
Other						

Q36 When determining whether to move your family or in selecting where to live in the Montgomery River Region, please indicate the level of importance the following educational factors contributed to your family's decision:

	Unimportant	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Highly Important	Not applicable
Good teachers						
Curriculum/ Academics						
School Safety						
Test Scores						
Academic Growth Rates						
Distance From Your Home						
Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities						
Athletic Extracurricular Activities						
Opinions of Other Parents						
Principal Leadership						
Discipline-Enforced						
Cleanliness - Upkeep of School						
Special Education Services						
Graduation Rates						

Q37 When determining your school options, please indicate how important the following forms of information were in your family's decision making:

	Unimportant	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Highly Important	Not Applicable
Great School Website						
Alabama Department of Education Reports						
Discussions with other service members who were stationed in the Montgomery River Region						
Local School Board Websites						
Visits to the School						
Local News Websites						
Spousal Facebook Pages						
Other						

Q38 If Air Force leadership were to advocate for school options for your family, please indicate the probability of enrolling one or more of your children in the following school settings:

	Not at All Probable	Somewhat Improbable	Neutral	Somewhat Probable	Very Probable	Not applicable, I would have no children in the age ranges for school year 2020-2021
My child attending Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS), K-8 which would NOT require on-base housing						
My child attending an on-base public 9-12 charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) which would require on-base housing						
My child attending an on-base public 9-12 charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) which would NOT require on-base housing						
My child attending an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with athletics) which would require on-base housing.						
My child attending an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with athletics) which would NOT require on-base housing.						

Q39 In considering your interest in the proposed school-settings, how important were the following in your decision:

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Special Education Services					
Transportation					
Before School Care					
After School Care					
Quality of On-Base Housing					
Lack of Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities					
Lack of Athletic Extracurricular Activities					
Other:					

Q40 If Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS) (assuming all other eligibility requirements are met) was opened to those living off-base, what would the benefits be to your family?

Q41 If Maxwell Elementary Middle School (MEMS) (assuming all other eligibility requirements are met) was opened to those living off-base, what concerns your family?

Q42 If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what would the benefits be to your family?

Q43 If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what concerns your family?

Q44 If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what would the benefits be to your family?

Q45 If an on-base 9-12 public charter school (without extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what concerns your family?

Q46 If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what would the benefits be to your family?

Q47 If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living on-base, what concerns your family?

Q48 If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what would the benefits be to your family?

Q49 If an on-base 9-12 Department of Defense school (with extracurricular activities to include sports) were opened to those living off-base, what concerns your family?