



The DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities

Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Military Community & Family Policy

After Action Report





Thank you for taking the time to read this after action report on the *Department of Defense (DoD) Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities* held in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 28-29, 2006. Many experts from military-connected communities invested the time for an intense two days to examine strategies, best practices, and resources for addressing the transition needs of communities and schools that serve the children of military and DoD employees.

Service members, community members, elected and appointed Officials, and schools all have a stake in ensuring that our children have access to quality education. Military installations, in collaboration with school districts, communities, and local governments, have already begun the process of planning for the large-scale relocation of families. This conference succeeded in augmenting that hard work with the opportunity to hear from a variety of experts who can help communities deal with challenges that come with the growth around military installations.

Over the next few years, our military children will be enrolling in the school systems that were represented at this conference. Our hope is that our children are warmly received and the transition will appear seamless as they move from one military community to the next. The *DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities* was a big step in making that transition smooth. There is still much work ahead. Thank you in advance for your time and energy and interest in making a difference in the lives of our military families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslye'.

Leslye A. Arsht
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Military Community and Family Policy)

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Introduction

On November 28–29, 2006, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, in collaboration with the DoD-State Liaison Office and the Military Services, held the DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities. The conference was designed to allow the Department to work together with other federal agencies, local and state education agencies, and local communities to ensure that military children have access to sufficient educational resources and facilities when they arrive at one of the installations highly impacted by growth. Seventeen communities attended the conference based on selection by their respective Service Headquarters. These communities encompassed the 14 states of Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. They are located near Department of Defense installations that have gained or are expected to gain dependent students from 2004 through 2011 as a result of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), rebasing, or force restructuring. The installations affected represent the following Services: 13 Army, 3 Air Force and 1 Navy.

Half of the communities attending the conference are located in medium or large cities and the other half are in communities with a population of less than 100,000 people. Two thirds of the communities have multiple school districts, with a third having only one school district affiliated with their installation. Six of the communities have more than one Uniformed Service with military installations in their immediate vicinity.

Participants

Each Garrison/Installation Commander sent a team of seven participants consisting of two members from the installation and five from the community surrounding the particular installation.

In the COMMANDERS category, two-thirds of the installation representatives were either “sitting” Garrison, Installation, Air Base Wing, or Mission Support Group Commanders.

In the ADDITIONAL MILITARY MEMBER category, over half of the representatives were School Liaison Officers (SLO's) or Military Liaison Officers with the remainder being in key positions that affect military members and their families.

In the COMMUNITY FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS LEADER category, two-thirds of the representatives were in the banking business or were senior corporate leaders.

In the SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT category, seven of the attendees were the Superintendent of Schools for their respective city, county or township.

In the MILITARY DEPENDENT PARENT category, participants were parents of military school age dependents – all interested in the education of military children.

In the MUNICIPAL OR COUNTY OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY PLANNING category, two-thirds of the representatives were directly involved in either Economic Development or City Management for their respective municipality.

In the MUNICIPAL OR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIAL category, there were half a dozen incumbent Mayors and several county officials.

A number of State Governors sent representatives from their offices and/or from their Department of Education. There were also representatives from several non-profit organizations, the Military Services, and from the Department of Defense.

A complete list of participants is found in Appendix 2. A general overview of attending communities/installations is found in Appendix 6.

Objectives for the Conference

Objectives for the conference allowed participants to:



- Explore strategies for expansion including finances, facilities, instruction, and successful education opportunities.
- Become familiar with policies and best practices in order to make informed decisions regarding the education of military children.
- Identify and network with experts who can assist their communities.
- Identify ways to support their Installation Transition Team and school districts when they return to their community.

The Department has a vested interest in quality education for military families even though elementary and secondary education is the jurisdiction of the state and local government. Attracting and retaining high quality personnel is a priority for the all volunteer Armed Forces today. One of the major factors in retaining the most capable personnel is providing quality educational experiences for Service Members and their families.

In an effort to augment the outstanding work already started by many communities, emphasis at the conference was placed on two key strands: “Finance and Facilities” and “Quality Education.” Throughout the conference, participants had the opportunity to hear from the experts who have successfully met the challenges the invited communities are now facing. A variety of breakout sessions focused on financial options, facilities expansion, school choice, and quality education. Breakout sessions provided a variety of resources and promising practices and strategies that community teams could adapt to their specific situation.

Presenters shared the Military Child Initiative created by John Hopkins University based on their study of the challenges that military children face with frequent moves in and out of school systems and how they are available to help schools and communities with military-connected students. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) shared their expertise in dealing with the issues of transition and quality education for military students who move frequently and have deployed parents. In addition, DoD collected best practices from communities that have experienced growth and offered the conference participants a wide range of ideas and technical assistance in identifying resources for financial and facilities planning.

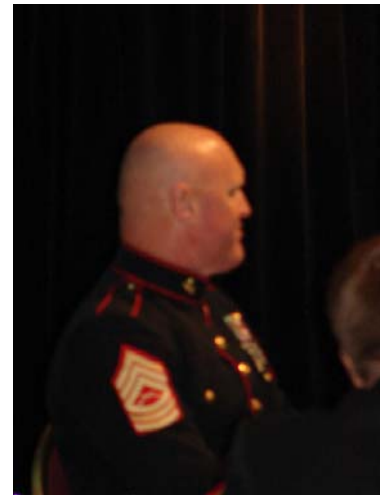
Finally, this conference established the first step in assisting communities to build productive relationships with state and federal agencies to create policies that enable Local Education Agencies to expand and construct schools and help communities to provide quality educational opportunities that meet the needs of military families.

Quality of Life Regional Liaisons

A Quality of Life Regional Liaison from the DoD-State Liaison Office supported each community team in attendance. The contact information for each liaison can be found in Appendix 3. In addition to the assistance they provided during this conference, QoL Regional Liaisons support other DoD quality of life issues. For more information and to identify the QoL Regional Liaison for your Region and/or Service, see Appendix 4.

This after-action report serves as a summary of the activities, presentations, and outcomes of the conference. For further information, contact:

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Executive Summary

Due to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), rebasing, and force restructuring and transformation, more than 63,000 military dependent students will be moving to and within the Continental United States school systems through 2011. These initiatives will enable the U.S. military to better match facilities and forces to meet the ongoing demands of the Global War on Terrorism and meet the challenges and threats while making the wisest use of limited defense dollars.

The Department of Defense (DoD) is working with those impacted communities to facilitate their ability to provide quality educational experiences for the children of the relocating military families. The DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities held in Atlanta, Georgia on November 28–29, 2006, was an opportunity to provide the affiliated communities/installations with valuable information. The following section provides a summary of the concepts developed in the body of this report.

Overview of the Conference

A complete agenda is found in Appendix 1.

General Sessions: Conference organizers provided opportunities for community teams to share, brainstorm, and problem solve in activities related to the progress and challenges they can experience with the influx of military-connected students.

Keynote Speakers: A variety of speakers who are content experts or have had experience in dealing with installation growth shared their stories and encouraged teams to share ideas, discuss their challenges, and brainstorm possible solutions.

Finance and Facilities Sessions: These seven sessions keyed on the alternative approaches to consider when communities are looking to build or expand their current facilities.

- A myriad of approaches to finance both new construction and expansion of current facilities include grants, public-private partnerships, building green, sale-leaseback, and identifying and securing state and local funds.
- Success stories from those who have faced and met the challenges due to large student load increases can inform those currently experiencing difficult challenges.
- The Services are working with the communities to form teams to plan the types and size of facilities needed based on the number of new students expected.
- The Office of Economic Adjustment has grants and personnel available to offer assistance with Growth Management Plans and Joint Land Use Studies.

Quality Education Sessions: These seven sessions focused on how more than just bricks and mortar are needed to provide a quality education. The sessions explored alternative schools, partnerships, and the challenges military-connected students face as they transition.

- Partnerships come in all shapes and sizes. Opportunities to improve quality education through school, family, universities and community partnerships are numerous.
- Many communities have been successful in improving quality education through Charter, Virtual and Cyber/Distance Learning schools.
- DoDEA shared their more than 60 years of experience serving military members and their children during the transition process. DoD now has the legislative authority to promote partnerships between DoDEA and local education agencies.

The Way Ahead

This conference provided the attending communities and their respective installations valuable new information that they can effectively use in their planning and implementation efforts. It provided them further insight into what they can do to ensure the smooth transition of their arriving military-connected students, as well as maintain the high quality of education that their communities expect.



General Sessions

Day One – Tuesday, November 28, 2006



Dr. Jean Silvernail (DoD-State Liaison Office) opened the conference with a warm greeting and a brief explanation of the conference's focus on the needs of the military child and the importance of communities taking a team approach when addressing their school related challenges. Next, Dr. Silvernail explained the details of "Framing the Issues," an exercise for teams to identify school successes and challenges they may have experienced or anticipate experiencing at their locations due to the influx of new

students. The activity also allowed community teams to see that there were many commonalities between the communities represented at the conference.

Ms. Leslye Arsht (Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy) welcomed all conference attendees and provided the expectations and vision for the conference. She explained the impact of the BRAC and how more than just bricks and mortar were needed to provide a quality education. She also stressed the importance of parental involvement and partnerships between the community and military to help with the additional challenges of deployments.

After lunch, **Mr. James Koch (Business Manager, Indian River Central School District, NY)** addressed the general session on how to build an education plan within a community plan. Mr. Koch spoke from experience on the major impact his Fort Drum and Philadelphia, N.Y. community witnessed when the Army's 10th Mountain Division (light Infantry) relocated there. He stressed the need for detailed plans and constant preparation required to adjust to changes as they occurred.

The day ended with teams rejoining to share what they learned in the seven breakout sessions that focused on financing and facilities. This cross-feed provided invaluable information on the total conference picture, keeping team members informed of the myriad of subjects covered and allowing teams to begin selecting promising ideas to take back to their communities.

The keynote speaker for dinner, **Mr. Gary Knell, CEO Sesame Workshop**, provided a compelling presentation focusing on partnerships. He explained how fostering partnerships has led to the continued success of Sesame Workshop's ability to expand in numerous countries and help children reach their highest potential. He shared the story behind the development of the DVD, "Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families During Military Deployment." This guide is meant to support parents as they talk to their 3-5 year olds about deployment. He closed with a preview of a PBS special program to be aired nationwide dedicated to children of deployed military members.

Day Two – Wednesday, November 29, 2006

Opening remarks were provided by **Dr. Joseph Tafoya (Director, DoDEA)**. Dr. Tafoya offered a detailed insight into the 221 schools DoDEA operates for the children and civilian family members of the U.S. Military and the Department of Defense in 13 countries, seven states in the United States, as well as schools in Puerto Rico, Guam, and Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba. His ongoing process for educational reform to increase student achievement and stress academic rigor have provided positive results. He invited interested school districts that want to partner with DoDEA to contact DoDEA in order to explore ways in which they can collaborate. Dr. Tafoya's remarks helped frame the focus of the day on quality education.

Ms. Carole Jean Carey (Superintendent, Warren County School District, Georgia) provided a very passionate and entertaining speech explaining how she took her school district from being the lowest out of 158 districts in Georgia to becoming an award-winning district. She did this by first shifting the element of control from student to faculty. She also rebuilt the staff, establishing high expectations for achievement and work ethic, and letting the students know she cared.

Job-alike groups (e.g., financial and business leaders, community elected officials, superintendents) met at lunch to discuss their roles in supporting community efforts when returning home.

As with day one, day two ended with community teams meeting. They summarized the day's breakout sessions, reviewed information received at the conference in relation to the challenges they had identified the first day, and identified possible actions to be taken upon return to their communities.



A Glimpse into Framing the Issues

Fort Bliss, Fort Lewis, and Fort Sam Houston team up to share their successes and challenges.



All members of the team had the opportunity to contribute their perspectives and experiences.

Teams had the opportunity to view ways other communities were addressing challenges.



Breakout Sessions - Finance and Facilities

Construction/Facilities: Federal Grants and Assistance

Presenters

Mr. Jim Houser, Director, Charter School Facility Programs, US Department of Education

Mr. Jack Stanek, Community Programs Specialist, USDA

Mr. Cecil Phillips, Chairman, CEO of Place Properties

Mr. Houser discussed the ED charter school program, funding for charter schools, the Federal School Facility Programs, tax-exempt bonds, and the uses of the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds. His presentation was extensive and addressed available funding and the difference in bonds that were construction-based, facility improvement-based, or furnishings-based.

Mr. Stanek spoke on the USDA Rural Development program, focusing on the loan and grant programs available. In addition, he spoke about the available funding for water and sewer development and facility funding.

Mr. Phillips presented the advantages of Qualified Public Education Funding (QPEF) bonds and how communities can benefit from a private builder. He emphasized that no voter approval is needed. Also, the initial outlay is all incurred by the builder. This subject generated enormous interest from his audience. The fact that this program has been in place for three years and has \$9 billion in available funding makes it intriguing. However, builders remain apprehensive toward this style of funding due to the walk away factor the builder incurs at the end of the lease.

State Best Practices

Presenters

Ms. Tara Butler, Senior Policy Analyst, National Governor's Association (NGA)

Ms. Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21st Century School Fund

Mr. Spessard Boatright, Director, Office of Education Facilities, Florida Department of Education

This session explored best practices and policies that some states have enacted related to school finances and facility construction.

Ms. Butler is an attorney in the NGA Center for Best Practices with background on the Base Realignment and Closure Act and school construction. She chaired this break-out session citing specific examples as to how installations and communities have worked together.

Ms. Filardo founded the 21st Century School Fund in 1994. This is a non-profit organization in the District of Columbia and she was knowledgeable about school construction issues across the fifty states. Her presentation and handouts presented an overview of national school construction spending; covered the national scale of the BRAC impact; and discussed state roles and responsibilities including resources, allocation of funding, uses of school construction funds, and types of state funding programs.

Mr. Boatright's presentation covered many aspects of the financing and construction of school facilities in the state of Florida. His presentation discussed sources of funds for public education, capital outlays, and legislative budget appropriations. He also discussed school construction requirements to include charter schools and helpful websites. Florida is regarded as a leader in managing their statewide school facility projects.

Alternative Approaches to Finance: One District's Challenge

Presenter

Mr. Jim Koch, Business Manager, Indian River School District

Building on his earlier story presentation, Building an Education Plan within a Community Plan, Jim Koch continued his discussion on how Indian River School District addressed financing methods to meet the needs of the large influx of military students to Fort Drum, New York.

The focus of his breakout session was essentially how the District managed growth from 1985, when Fort Drum started receiving large numbers of military students, to the present and beyond. He emphasized that communities experiencing growth as a result of BRAC initiatives should recognize the economic opportunities that are presented. Also, it is critically important in dealing with challenges that the community takes a team approach. At Fort Drum, during the initial stages of growth, the community responded by mobilizing such resources as the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, Industrial Development Authority, and City/Town/County Planning Boards. Some of the organizations that were established to deal with the BRAC impact have now shifted their efforts to lobby for the District. He underscored the importance of working with the media saying, "... if we mishandle the press, the press will mishandle us."

Mr. Koch pointed out the need to recognize that demographics change with the type of military unit. Unless you know the type of units coming to an installation, you cannot plan effectively.

Relative to funding, he made it clear that there is no single answer. In up-state New York, a simple majority vote for bonds is all that is required. This requirement may not be the case in other jurisdictions. He also recommended leasing facilities for the short term rather than constructing. Partnering with industry, as well as partnering with other public entities, brings significant benefits. Although looking for Federal Grants and Impact Aid monies is worth the effort, short term notes as well as Energy Performance Projects and the Universal Service Fund should not be overlooked.

Financing School Expansion

Presenters

Dr. David Lever, Executive Director, Maryland Public School Construction Program

Ms. Kathleen Langan, Vice President, Hess Construction

Dr. David Lever covered a myriad of issues related to financing school construction with very specific steps and procedures. Specifically, he discussed school construction costs, the definitions of Funding vs. Financing, Public-Public Partnerships, and alternative financing to school construction. He covered the four types of alternative school construction financing

which included Sale Leaseback, Lease Leaseback, Public-Private Partnership, and Performance Based Contracting.

Ms. Kathleen Langan covered the Public-Private Partnerships case study in Stafford County, Virginia called the Armstrong Site. The Stafford County Public Schools purchased 150 acres valued at 1.4 million in 1999. Over the next several years, the district developed a comprehensive and creative approach integrating services while controlling delivery risk. They incorporated revenue components and created an inspiring educational campus, a senior living area, and a YMCA. The objective was to meet community needs while reducing school cost. The Stafford County Virginia Armstrong Site resulted in senior citizens working with K-5 grade students; 9-12 grade students also shared facilities with the other community services and senior citizens.

Overall, the presentation offered a great deal of information with a superb example of a future community/school facility site that reduces cost while having resources available to the schools and both teenagers and senior citizens.

Planning for Expansion

Presenters

Ms. P.K. Tomlinson, Deputy Director, US Army MWR, Community and Family Support

Mr. Gary Willis, Project Manager, OSD-Office of Economic Adjustment

Ms. Debbie Reynolds, US Army Housing Office

Ms. Tomlinson shared the Army School Transition Plan, the Secondary Education Transition Plan (SETS) and the 2005 Education Summit. Her focus was on ways to plan and assist schools and installations to ensure a seamless transition for incoming military students.

Mr. Willis discussed the role of the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) and the assistance that they can offer to communities when trying to manage community growth. He emphasized that the community must establish a growth plan and get assistance from local, state, and federal levels. He offered examples of grants given by the OEA for Joint Land Use Studies and Building Growth Management Plans.

Ms. Reynolds highlighted Army Housing Programs and how the Installations' Housing Market Analysis (HMA) was completed. She also discussed the risk the Services were taking in assuming that communities would build affordable housing for the military Service Members and their families. She explained in both sessions that the DoD anchor points are what the HMA's are based on when considering what is affordable housing.

Education Grants on Curriculum and Instruction and Navigating the ED Website for Grants

Presenter

Mr. Dean Kern, Director, Charter Schools Program, Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

The session addressed support of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) offices that assist schools by offering partnerships, grants, and initiatives to address quality instruction, curriculum, and some financial assistance for charter school facilities. Mr. Kern explored the ED website and how and why to apply for competitive grants that may help schools expand with quality. Mr. Kern engaged the group in a discussion of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). He cleared up some of the misconceptions associated with NCLB.

Designing Schools on a Limited Budget

Presenters

Mr. Russ Roberts, Chief of Facilities, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

Dr. A. Lee Burch, Senior Vice President and National Practice Leader for 3DI

Dr. John Deegan, Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools and Chief Executive Officer, Military Impacted Schools Association

Mr. Roberts focused on the standardization of facilities in order to save money. He encouraged defining the standard for what is needed in a facility in order to be cost effective and efficient. If a fast food restaurant or a hotel chain can design a cost effective and efficient prototype, then it would save schools a lot to do the same. The question to ask is, “What does a science lab need or a gym need to be effective and efficient?” Define, design and then build the same model in multiple sites. He further explained that this can be done with modular buildings; however, the quality of modular is important or money is wasted in maintenance costs.

Dr. Deegan discussed green technology and facilities sharing. He expanded the responsibility of schools beyond a K-12 concept to Pre-K and senior citizens. School facilities are more community-focused lifelong learning centers with involvement across generations. Facilities are shared between the local community, military, colleges, and the schools. This approach saves resources, saves money, and helps the community. He encouraged building partnerships. He also encouraged building green because it saves money and a quick return is gained over five to ten years.

Dr. Burch shared that saving time and money takes planning. He emphasized the importance of spending time in the planning; it takes longer but costs less. It is much cheaper to change your mind in the planning stage than after supplies or workers have already been purchased or contracted. Schools should do anything that pays them back in five to ten years. Ideas included tapping into teens savvy on technology; internet is out, text messaging is in, so schools should use this technology. Participants were encouraged to think out of the box and ask, “Who has a vested interest other than schools? Utility companies? Parks and recreation?” Project/construction management is key to a successful design.

Breakout Sessions - Quality Education

Successful Models – Charter Schools

Presenter

Mr. Dean Kern, Director, Charter Schools Program, Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

Mr. Kern gave a comprehensive overview of development of charter schools, charter school authorizers, and accountability requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). His presentation took into full consideration that he was addressing a military group - something that he had not done before. Thus, he focused on how charter schools may provide opportunities to meet the needs of an installation that is facing a large influx of military students.

He cited statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of charter schools and reported that currently there are over 4,000 charter schools nationwide. New charter schools are growing at the rate of 13 percent annually. He emphasized that charter schools are public schools and that they come about as a result of grassroots movements. One of the prime values of charter schools is that they provide choice - something that he felt military families consider highly important.

Also, Mr. Kern reported that charter schools now represent a \$200M program annually and that funds are now authorized for credit enhancement and facilities incentives. There are over 40 states and the District of Columbia that have charter legislation. California and the District of Columbia have the strongest legislation. Virginia started with eight and is down to only four schools now operating. The state of Washington has tried for the past three years to pass legislation and every attempt has failed. New York has a charter school law but it has a cap and there has been considerable political resistance to removing the cap.

Mr. Kern expressed the willingness of the U.S. Department of Education to assist any local group with the desire to establish a charter school.

Successful Models – Cyber Schools & Distance Learning

Presenters

Ms. Susan Stewart, Head of School, Washington Virtual Academy and K-12

Mr. Mike Connelly, Academic Administrator, Washington Virtual Academy and K-12

The presenters shared the success story of a partnership between a public school district and K-12, a national private company (now called Washington Virtual Academy [WAVA] in Washington State). The school delivers an online K-8 public school curriculum to 1300 Washington State students. WAVA was a pilot program for the first two years and available only to the town of Steilacoom. The program went statewide in its third year. Ms. Susan Stewart, Head of School, described the hurdles in establishing relationships with the school district and parents to make the academy successful. Mr. Mark Connelly, Academic Administrator, described and gave a live demonstration of the online curriculum. WAVA students do not spend all their time in front of a computer but participate in socialization activities like field trips, outdoor labs, and community programs.

Creating School, Family, and Community Partnerships for Student Success

Presenter

Ms. Darcy Hutchins, Senior Program Facilitator, National Network of Partnership Schools, Johns Hopkins University

Ms. Hutchins spoke on engaging community support in the school. She provided expert examples of community interaction with schools, from the senior citizen to the local businesses. Her PowerPoint presentation provided a clear understanding of where schools were in the 1960's and how many successful schools have evolved into community hot spots for all to enjoy.

Quality Schools

Presenters

Ms Taffy Corrigan, Acting Associate Director, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

Anne Muse, Educational Business Manager, DoDEA

This session explored the elements of a quality school and examined tools used in the Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) such as strategic planning, the curriculum renewal process, and best practices. Presenters shared DoDEA initiatives that encourage rigor. They also shared possibilities for partnering with DoDEA for support in school improvement.

Ms. Corrigan and Ms. Muse teamed together to present DoDEA's community strategic plan, revealing what a DoDEA standards-driven system looks like and sharing the Quality Indicator Maps and their current initiatives, such as the Foreign Language Initiative and READ 180.

Military Child in Transition and Deployment

Presenters

Dr. Jean Silvernail, DoD State Liaison Office

Ms. Terina Clark, School Liaison Officer, Pacific Air Forces, HI

Dr. Jean Silvernail discussed the many challenges facing our military children during deployment and transition and shared resources available to assist in addressing these challenges. The average military child will change schools six to eight times prior to high school graduation. Dr. Silvernail covered the emotional impact on our children during deployment and transition. She did this by explaining the emotional impact on the different age groups (6-8, 10-12, and 13-18), how each age group responds differently to the parent's deployment, and the effects of deployment on children's behavior in school and at home.

Dr. Silvernail also spoke of the many resources available to the community. Johns Hopkins University will launch an on-line course for teachers in April 2007, which will cover the background of military students, military family lifestyle, and challenges facing our military children during deployment and transition. In addition, the course will cover the importance of establishing partnerships between parents, schools, and communities as essential for positive behavioral, academic, and health outcomes. Other resources from MCEC and MISA were provided.

Ms. Terina Clark spoke from the perspective of a School Liaison Officer in Hawaii. She presented many examples of the challenges facing our military children supporting Dr. Silvernail's presentation. She spoke of the long history of the Hawaiian Military Culture and the transition services available to military students in Hawaii. She also gave a great example on how difficult change can be for military children having to transfer from school to school by having the audience conduct a classroom exercise on change.

There was discussion after the presentation on having a "National Teacher Certification" program rather than having to certify in each and every state. Teacher certification through ABCTE.ORG is attempting to promote a national teacher certification and is currently recognized in six states as an acceptable teaching certification program.

Confronting Educational Challenges

Presenters

Ms. Carole Jean Carey, Superintendent, Warren County School District, Warrenton, GA
Mr. Antonio Hill, Principal, Freeman Elementary School, Warren County School District
Mr. Truett Abbott, Principal, Warren County Middle School, Warren County School District

Ms. Carey spoke about the challenges Warren County School District faced when she came on board in 2001. The district was ranked 148 out of 148 school districts in the state of Georgia. The major challenges she faced were lack of funding, a large debt, outdated facilities, uncertified teaching staff, and discipline problems. She explained how, through grants such as the 21st Century Grant and the Bill Gates Performance Learning Grant, she was able to pay off the debts, build new facilities, and improve the quality of education in Warren County. She also emphasized the importance of community partnerships in obtaining needed funds. She discussed the changes made in the faculty and the different programs initiated to continue to improve the students' quality of education. Some school districts hire someone to write their grants, but she and her staff are currently writing all of the grants for Warren County School District.

Mr. Hill talked about the changes made at the Freeman Elementary School (K-5). He discussed how they had made transitional classes between Kindergarten and 1st grade, as well as between 1st and 2nd grade, for those students not quite ready to advance. They started Data Meetings every Monday to analyze student scores by grade levels in order to evaluate the students' needs. They use these meetings to look at ways to improve student performance and adjust teaching strategies. He described how they had incorporated the Pyramid of Intervention in dealing with performance issues.

Mr. Abbott discussed the changes made at the Warren County Middle School. They have instituted transitional classes for those students coming from the elementary school but not yet achieving at the required level of performance. The transition classes are an effort to keep these students from falling too far behind their peers. He also discussed the discipline Pyramid of Intervention they use at all three levels that has resulted in an improved learning environment.

Communicating with Military Families

Presenters

Mr. Frank O’Gara, Education Communications Officer, DoDEA

Ms. Fannette Welton, Chief of Distance Education Program, DoDEA

The presenters discussed how the Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) stays connected to military communities based on their 60 years of service to military families. They shared the implications of effective communication for schools and public relations. Mr. O’Gara explained in detail how school districts and principals can best position themselves with installations and commands to better serve military children.

Mr. O’Gara and Ms. Welton provided tips on how to work with military families and commanders. They highlighted ways to leverage the capabilities of School Liaison Officers (SLO’s). They also discussed opportunities for communication partnerships and explained helpful resources.



Breakout Session Feedback

Sessions Reflection Form

During each breakout session, the participants were asked to complete a Session Reflection Form indicating:

- ~ What were the key messages in this session?
- ~ What information and/or resources from this session do you think will be significant and relevant for your team?

The participants used these worksheets to facilitate their sharing when they returned to their respective teams.

Session Feedback Form

At the conclusion of the breakout session, the participants were asked to complete a Session Feedback Form indicating:

- ~ What information do you still need about this topic?
- ~ What are questions you still have related to this topic?
- ~ What are the next steps that need to be taken related to this topic?

The Session Feedback Forms were collected and the content has been summarized at Appendix 5 as a recap of the type of information that the installations have requested. The DoD-State Liaison Office will work with each Service Headquarters to provide the appropriate information requested to each respective Team Leader.



Summary of Major Observations

- Involving non-traditional community participants brings a fresh and valued support and advocacy to the planning process.

Many of the participants on the community/installation teams had not met each other until this conference. Involving a broad range of community members brought new eyes to the challenges the community faces. In just two days, the two installation members, often including the installation commander and the School Liaison Officer, in conjunction with the five community members encompassing an Elected Official, Community Planner, Financial Leader, School Superintendent and Military Parent developed a viable working relationship that promises to continue when they return to their home station/community.

- The “Framing the Issue” and “Team Work Planning/Sharing” sessions created a valuable learning experience among and between the 17 community/installation teams.

In a very short period of time, the different teams were able to brainstorm their successes and challenges in the strands of Finances, Facilities, and Quality Education. As six groups consisting of three community teams each worked simultaneously sharing what they have done and what they need to do to prepare for the influx of military-connected children in the next five or so years, they quickly recognized challenges for their communities to address. Many of the teams shared common challenges.

- The opportunity for educators to share their experiences with one another provided participants the potential to broaden their capabilities.

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) has been working with military students for sixty years and they provided insights about military children to a number of community officials. At the same time, the Superintendent and two principals from Warrenton, Georgia showed how commitment to Profession, Job, and People can be essential keys to learning despite a rural and lower income environment that does not have any ties to the military. Both discussed how learning more about the unique characteristics of their students and families helped them address quality education needs.

- Strong and lasting partnerships are essential elements in providing quality education to military children.

The Department of Defense and the Military Services have developed effective relationships with numerous non-profit organizations. Representatives from these organizations who provided valuable insight to the community/installation teams included MCEC – Military Child Education Coalition, MISA – Military Impacted Schools Association, MOAA – Military Officers Association of America, NMFA – National Military Family Association, AUSA – Association of the United States

Army, and the Sesame Workshop. There will hopefully be many opportunities to expand these types of alliances in the future.

- When professionals come together to share their knowledge, they unleash their passion which can stimulate others to solve difficult problems.

The fourteen break-out sessions which focused on finances/facilities and quality schools put experts on the podium which included top notch financial and budget analysts, accountants, architects, urban planners, lawyers, business managers, and educators who shared their wealth of knowledge with people from Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) communities/installations. The networking that occurred promises to continue as these professionals work together in the months and years ahead.

- The continued interface of Department of Defense and Military Service representatives with state officials at the legislative and educational level will continue to strengthen DoD – State engagements.

A number of state officials actively participated in this conference and, for many, it was probably the first time that they obtained a true appreciation of the educational and social challenges faced by military children. The conference gave the state officials the opportunity to examine the many things that can be done at the state level to resolve these problems and facilitate educational opportunities. State officials also had the opportunity to meet among themselves and benchmark their own problems.



Appendices



The DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities

28-29 November 2006 • Hilton Atlanta • Atlanta, Georgia

Agenda

Time	Monday, November 27	Room
1800-2000	Registration	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
1830-1900	Team Installation/Garrison Commander (or Representative) Meeting	Fulton Room – 2nd Floor
1900-2000	Reception/Team Greeting/Introductions	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
Time	Tuesday, November 28	Room
0700-0800	Registration/Breakfast	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
0730-0800	Team Sharing	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
0800-1015	Opening – Conference MC: Dr. Jean Silvernail (DoD State Liaison Office) US FORSCOM Honor Guard – Colors Welcome/Conference Expectations/Vision – Ms Leslye Arsht (DUSD, P&R (MC&FP)) Needs of Military Child • Miss Latreicia Allen (Student, Taegu, Korea) • MSgt Alex Radke (Deployed Parent, USMC, Grand Prairie, TX) Framing the Issues – Identifying Successes and Challenges Themes Presentation Dr. Marc Mossburg (DoD State Liaison Office), Ms. Taffy Corrigan (DoDEA), Mr. Marcus Beauregard (DoD State Liaison Office) Logistics/Agenda/Outcomes – Dr. Jean Silvernail	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
1015-1030	Break	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
1030-1120	Story Presentation (Facilities & Finance) Building an Education Plan within a Community Plan – Mr. James Koch (Business Manager, Indian River Central School District, NY) Processing in Teams	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
1130-1215	Lunch	Grand Salon East – 2nd Floor
1230-1345	BREAKOUT SESSION 1 Construction/Facilities Federal Grants & Assistance – Mr. Jim Houser State Best Practices – Ms Tara Butler Alternative Approaches to Finance: One District's Challenge – Mr. James Koch Financing School Expansion – Dr. David Lever Planning for Expansion – Mr. Marcus Beauregard School Facilities Sharing, A New Look at Relocatable Classrooms, and "Building Green" – Mr. Russ Roberts ED Grants on Curriculum & Instruction and Navigating the ED Website for Grants – Mr. Dean Kern	Crystal Ballroom A/F – Lobby Level Jackson – 3rd Floor Crystal Ballroom C/D – Lobby Level Madison – 3rd Floor Roosevelt – 3rd Floor Carter – 3rd Floor Monroe – 3rd Floor
1345-1400	Break	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
1400-1515	BREAKOUT SESSION 2 (see 1230-1345 for sessions and room assignments)	
1530-1615	Team Work	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
1615-1630	Closure – Ms Leslye Arsht	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
1715-1800	Networking Reception	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
1800-1930	Dinner – Keynote Speaker: Mr. Gary Knell, CEO of Sesame Workshop	Grand Salon East – 2nd Floor



Time	Wednesday, November 29	Room
0700-0800	Registration/Breakfast	Grand Salon Foyer – 2nd Floor
0800-0815	Opening Remarks – Dr. Joseph Tafoya (Director, DoDEA)	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
0815-0845	Story Presentation: Confronting Education Challenges – Ms Carole Jean Carey (Superintendent, Warren County School District, GA) Processing in Teams	Grand Salon West – 2nd Floor
0900-1015	BREAKOUT SESSION 3 Successful Models – Charter Schools – Mr. Dean Kern Creating School, Family, and Community Partnerships for Student Success – Ms Darcy Hutchins Successful Models – Cyber Schools & Distance Learning – Ms Susan Stewart Quality Schools – Ms Taffy Corrigan Military Child In Transition and Deployment – Dr. Jean Silvermail Communication with Military Families – Mr. Frank O’Gara Confronting Educational Challenges – Ms Carol Jean Carey	Carter – 3rd Floor Crystal Ballroom A/F – Lobby Level Jackson – 3rd Floor Madison – 3rd Floor Roosevelt – 3rd Floor Monroe – 3rd Floor Crystal Ballroom C/D – Lobby Level
1015-1030	Break	Grand Salon Foyer/Carter Foyer
1030-1145	BREAKOUT SESSION 4 (See 0900-1015 for sessions and room assignments)	
1200-1300	Lunch by Job Alike Groups	Grand Salon East – 2nd Floor
1315-1515	Team Work Planning/Sharing	Grand Salon East – 2nd Floor
1515-1530	Closing – Mr. George Schaefer (DoD State Liaison Office)	Grand Salon WestD – 2nd Floor

APPENDIX 6

Information Requested by Participants

After each breakout session, participants were asked what further information they would like and what questions they still had. Since many of the comments/questions were similar, the main points are summarized below:

Breakout Sessions – Finance and Facilities

Construction/Facilities Federal Grants and Assistance

- More information and specific details on Qualified Public Education Funding (QPEF) Bonds.
- Could QPEF funds be used to construct/renovate a school located on federal property?
- I would like to know more about Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB's).
- What grants are available through the USDA?
- Charter schools funding appears to only be available for charter schools; why not provide the same rules for public schools?

State Best Practices

- What states have amended their state laws or regulations to help support BRAC and what were those changes?
- I want a list of states handling this issue best and a brief synopsis of how they are doing.
- More examples of successes that states and local governments are finding to garner funding.
- Additional website information pertinent to financing school construction would be helpful.
- Where do I find grants for capital growth?

Alternative Approaches to Financing: One District's Challenge

- More case studies from around the country on a DoD website.
- How to create a scatter gram that accounts for student growth.
- Energy savings methods to defray school construction and/or modifications.
- What is Impact Aid school construction money?
- Details on Universal Service Fund rebate for technology.

Financing School Expansion

- What opportunities exist to explore Public Partnership for an "Academy Campus" on our post?
- Specific information on Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) and other examples of PPEA.

- Does each state have to pass legislation to allow Public/Private Partnerships?
- Would like more information on the Sale Leaseback process.
- Strategies for attracting private sector into public/private partnerships.

Planning for Expansion

- Could we get a couple of good Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) Plans for Growth Management? Not a generic plan but a real one that has been completed and is being implemented.
- More information on how the OEA is reaching out to educate communities on the services available and how the communities can engage the OEA for planning purposes.
- What specific steps can be taken by communities to access OEA help?
- A sample business plan with question and answers for BRAC issues.
- How do we get help such as grants and low interest rate loans?

Designing Schools on a Limited Budget

- Who else other than power companies have grants for building green?
- What are the costs for going green?
- Develop a plan for "going green".
- Present standard design to school districts for possible application.
- Is there a cost or limit to using DoDEA specs?

Education Grants on Curriculum and Instruction and Navigating the ED Website for Grants

- What is available now to prepare schools that are already at risk, to be ready for the impact of newcomers, while at the same time serving the needs of current students?
- Where can I find more examples and information on grant writing, sources, and reasons?
- Need more information on developing charter schools and applying for grants.
- What is being done to convey that "it" is not business as usual when addressing BRAC issues?

Breakout Sessions - Quality Education

Successful Models - Charter Schools

- Are there funding discrepancies since charter schools are considered public schools and compete for the same pot of money?
- What are the steps involved to start charter schools?
- Would like to compare the DoD education curriculum with that of a typical charter school.
- What is the long term track record and performance data of charter schools?
- A copy of the Successful Charter Schools book and more info on the 8 schools cited in the book.

Creating School, Family, and Community Partnerships for Student Success

- Explore more possibilities of partnerships.
- What is the best way to sell partnership programs to the community?
- Are training sessions provided for the leadership that is needed to develop effective partnerships?
- Would be good for National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) to organize website to growth/transition best practices and links to other regional websites that deal with this.
- I will use the partnership website to review additional information.

Successful Models - Cyber Schools/Distance Learning

- Can K-12 partner with DOD on military installations?
- Who determines the curriculum?
- How do we develop the course, materials, etc.?
- How is socialization affected?
- Is this expanding to other states?

Quality Schools

- More information about the Foreign Language Initiative.
- What are the performance measures for teachers (Quantitative/qualitative)?
- How to obtain and keep high quality teachers?
- What is in place to ensure success for students coming from DoD schools to public schools?
- What partnerships does DoDEA have and encourages?

Military Child in Transition and Deployment

- How to educate the general community about the military child/family entering their schools.
- How can we better educate our entire community on the deployment cycle?
- What is military protocol for war fatalities that school staffs need to know?
- How can we better educate all teachers, counselors, and administrative staff on the impact of deployment?
- Keep pushing for legislative action for academic consistency and teacher certification across states.

Confronting Educational Challenges

- What programs do you have to ensure all students are focused on quality education?
- More information on the data meetings the teachers hold with the students.
- How do you find the details on available grants?
- Example of their Pyramid for Discipline.
- More information on using charter school grants for public school needs.

Communication with Military Families

- Command support -- Is there a plan (written) in place?
- Does DoDDS have a DVD for parents/students?
- More info on what moves are being made toward inter-state/county/district reciprocity on grades and credits.
- It would be great if the list of resources could be put on the DoDEA website.
- More details on School Liaison Officers (SLO's).

APPENDIX 7

Summary of DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities

PURPOSE

The information in this paper helped the presenters at the DoD Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities, November 28–29, in Atlanta, Georgia, better understand their prospective audience. The data used for analysis was obtained from research conducted by the DoD-State Liaison Office using open sources such as the internet, newspapers, city/county council meeting notes, or other published documents; information is portrayed in the aggregate and may not reflect the most current information available, but the information gave presenters a general awareness of the audience.

DISCUSSION

General Information

Communities Attending

- The Military Services have identified seventeen communities to attend the conference.
 - These communities encompass the 14 states of Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Washington.
 - They are located near Department of Defense installations that have gained or are expected to have a net gain of 250 or more dependent students from 2004 through 2011 as a result of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), rebasing or force restructuring -- 13 Army, 3 Air Force and 1 Navy installation.
 - One-half of these communities were programmed to have some gain in military students in the 04/05 School Year, while a third will not actually see the additional military students until the start of the 07/08 School Year.
- Half of these communities are located in medium or large cities and the other half are in communities with a population of less than 100,000 people.
 - Two thirds of the communities have multiple school districts, with a third having only one school district affiliated with their installation.
 - Five of the communities have more than one Uniformed Service with military installations in their immediate vicinity.

Conference Participants

- Each Garrison/Installation Commander is projected to send a team of seven participants with two of them being from the installation and five from the community surrounding their particular installation.
 - In the COMMANDERS category, two-thirds of the installation representatives are either “sitting” Garrison, Installation, Air Base Wing, or Mission Support Group Commanders.
 - In the ADDITIONAL MILITARY MEMBER category, over half of the representatives are School Liaison Officers (SLO’s) or Military Liaison Officers, with the remainder being in key positions that affect military members and their families.
 - In the COMMUNITY FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS LEADER category, two-thirds of the representatives are in the banking business or are senior corporate leaders.
 - In the SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT category, seven of these attendees are THE Superintendent of Schools for their respective City, County or Township.
 - In the MILITARY DEPENDENT PARENT category, the attendees are parents of military school age dependents – all interested in the education of military children.
 - In the MUNICIPAL OR COUNTY OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY PLANNING category, two-thirds of the representatives are directly involved in either Economic Development or City Management for their respective municipality.
 - In the MUNICIPAL OR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIAL category, there are a half dozen incumbent Mayors and several county officials.
- A number of State Governors will be sending representatives from their offices and/or from their Department of Education.
- There will also be representatives from several non-profit organizations, the Military Services, and from the Department of Defense.

Finance and Facilities

Community Plans

- From the research data gathered, the attending communities have some form of Team addressing their respective issues under a variety of names but they are essentially doing similar work.
 - Most of the communities have an established Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Task Force or Working Group, or a Planning, Growth, or Education Committee.

--- These Teams are admittedly in different stages of planning ranging from fully developed to being in their inception.

-- One particular community attending the conference does have a detailed plan for School Expansion and Community Development.

- As a rule, the communities and their respective installations are either posturing or postured to plan and anticipate growth in their community and schools.

Federal/State Support

- Many of the communities scheduled to attend the conference appear to be very interested in learning about Federal Funding opportunities.

-- Thus far, one community has obtained a grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to partner in a Joint Land Use Study.

- There is a varying degree of activity regarding the use of State Funding.

-- In one state the House and Senate have responded to provide state funding in response to BRAC decisions; status of these budget amendments is not clear at this point.

-- Another city is located in a federally designated Enterprise Community which makes it eligible for Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB).

Facilities

- Several of the attending communities appear to be quite interested in the prospects of learning more about building new or expanding their current facilities in order to accommodate additional military students and meet their educational needs.

-- A couple communities are seeking \$55M for system-wide construction or \$33M for general obligated bonds.

-- One community has applied for a "Planning Grant" and is researching the Qualified Public Educational Facilities (QPEF) Bond Funding.

-- At a number of locations, communities are requiring developers to plan for schools, land set asides, or provide proffers.

Financing

- Several Independent School Districts in a particular community programmatically float a bond issue every four or five years in order to maintain adequate school facilities, regardless of the BRAC impact.
 - One community already has a Charter School Capital Outlay.
 - Five communities are aware of how to navigate the education websites for grants.
- Based on the research, it is difficult to determine to what extent the communities are aware of alternative approaches to financing new construction or whether they are familiar with innovative grant and credit programs such as Geo-Thermal energy.
 - One community is exploring Sale-Leaseback programs.
 - Several communities are aware of Public-Private partnerships where the communities and schools share in building use.
 - It cannot be determined if school districts are already “building green.”

Quality Education

School Models

- Most of the communities provide alternatives to regular “brick and mortar” public schools but the availability of the different options varies from location to location.
 - Several communities have begun to use the cyber school model, also known as virtual, on-line and internet schools.
 - One state started their “Virtual School System” in school year 2005 – 2006 and another state began a “Virtual Pilot Program” in the summer of 2006.
 - In another state, innovative programs reimburse small districts for purchasing supplemental on-line courses from a state-led program and other providers.
 - In another location, “E-School” is a state led program and they anticipate additional cyber charter applications.
 - Over half of the states represented at the conference authorize charter schools while a couple states specifically do not.
 - While some states have a cap on the number of charter schools, other states do not have a limit.
 - Even if authorized by the state, a couple of installations do not have charter schools in their community.

- Most of the communities do offer private/parochial schools and there appears to be minimum exposure to magnet/lab schools.

Partnerships

- As a whole, the installations attending the conference appear to have strong ties with their affiliated communities.
 - A number of installations are already working closely with their Chamber of Commerce or city/county officials.
 - One of the attending communities has an “Alliance for World Class Education” comprised of business leaders and school leaders who focus on strategic, intellectual, and facilitative initiatives to affect positive change in the county’s public education system and they help to arrange school partnerships with community businesses.
 - In another community, a military member is appointed as a non-voting member to the eight member School Board of Trustees.
- One school district partners with the local police and fire departments.

Quality Schools

- Over a third of the seventeen attending communities offer open enrollment where a child can attend school in a district other than the one in which they reside.
 - One state has an intradistrict/mandatory policy and an interdistrict/voluntary policy.
- In one community, school board members concentrate their energies in strategic areas such as teacher quality and education, principal excellence, governance, and organizational effectiveness.
- In another community, there is a state sponsored, regional Education Service Center that assists school districts, private schools, and charter schools in improving student performance and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of school operations.
- Periodic assessment tests are administered in several states at specific grade levels in subject areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Military Child

- A number of the communities are familiar with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) literature and programs including Transition Counselors Institute (TCI) Level I, II and III; Special Education Leadership Institute (SELI); Student to Student (S2S) Programs; and Parent to Parent (P2P) Programs.

- Some School Liaison Officers (SLO's) serve on advisory boards and regularly attend Board of Education meetings where they provide information regarding transition and deployment issues faced by military students, installation information that may affect the school district, installation calendars for coordination, and the like.
- Some school district leaders, military leaders, and military parents are using the Department of Defense "Military Students on the Move" toolkit series to support students who move frequently.
- At least one installation has a Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) with their school districts to address the issues unique to transitioning military dependents.
- Several communities have either a "Special Needs Division," a dedicated school, or a "Student Services Team" to help parents and educators with special needs situations.

Communication

- In all but just a few cases, all of the installations have an existing website with either the information or links to the school districts in their community that assist incoming military parents with school enrollment/practices.

Teacher Recruitment

- The school districts appear to welcome information on more effective recruitment programs for teachers.
 - One district has an Information Center that offers information for career opportunities at their area schools.
 - A community that is admittedly in a high cost area offers a housing stipend for teachers and a relocation bonus for out of state special education teacher recruitment.
 - One state offers a Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program, a Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program, no state income tax, and they pay 100 percent for major medical for the employee.
 - One state offers teachers who have a National Board Certification around \$4,000 annual salary supplement and another state offers \$7,500.
- As regards recruitment concerns, one community is interested in recruiting/retaining high quality Special Education teachers.
- There appears to be a general familiarity in the districts with the Troops/Spouses to Teacher programs and one state, in particular, has a "bulletin board" on their Public Schools website.