SYNERGY ENTERPRISES, INC., AN 8(A)-CERTIFIED, WOMAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS

DoDEA Educational Partnership Grant Program 2009-2010 Annual Evaluation Report

Submitted by:

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Overview

In 2007, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) received authority in the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act to work collaboratively with the Department of Education. This initiative, the Educational Partnership Program, is designed to ease military-dependent students' transition from attendance in DoDEA schools to attendance in local education agency (LEA) schools that educate military students. Through the Educational Partnership Program, the Department of Defense (DoD) works with LEAs to ensure that students of military families receive the best educational opportunities. This program promotes quality education, seamless transitions, and deployment support for military students through outreach and partnership development. As part of the Educational Partnership Program, DoDEA supports programs that enhance military-connected LEAs and disseminates information on resources that are available for military-connected LEAs.

2009 and 2010 Cohorts of Educational Partnership Grants

Currently, DoDEA has awarded three-year Educational Partnership Grants to two consecutive cohorts of LEAs. In 2009, 45 grants were awarded, and 32 grants were awarded in 2010. These grants allow the implementation of projects that enhance learning opportunities, student achievement and educator professional development in schools where at least 15 percent of enrolled students come from military families. The grantees from the 2009 cohort are the focus of this annual report as they now have one full year of implementation data. The 2010 cohort will be submitting their first quarterly reports in January 2011.

The LEAs from the 2009 cohort are located in 20 states and have implemented projects in 302 PreK-12 schools. More information on the demographics of these grant recipients, their schools, and their students was provided in the June 2010 Semi-Annual Report (see Appendix A).

The Evaluation Technical Assistance Center

To assist with the Educational Partnership Grant Program, Synergy Enterprises Inc. (SEI) was contracted in September 2009 to institute the Evaluation Technical Assistance Center (ETAC). The staff of ETAC provides technical assistance to grantees in conducting their project evaluations and provides DoDEA with an overall evaluation of how well the grant program is meeting its three goals of: (1) enhancing student learning opportunities, (2) increasing student achievement, and (3) conducting educator professional development. This report provides a descriptive analysis of the data submitted by the 2009 grantees in their fourth quarter reports and a summary of the information contained in the annual

reports completed by the individual projects' evaluators. This analysis, combined with the information in the semi-annual report submitted to DoDEA in June 2010 and the Grant Impact Summary report in November 2010 (see Appendix B), adds to the overall evaluation of the impact of the grant projects. Challenges that DoDEA, ETAC and the grantees encountered in collecting, processing and reporting this information are used in evaluating the overall program and in making recommendations for improvements for subsequent grant years (see Appendix C).

Grantee Fourth Quarter Reports

In the fourth quarter, grantees continued to submit information about their project activities, challenges to implementation and responses to those challenges as they had in previous quarters. Additionally, grantees provided interim outcome information and copies of their Annual Evaluation Report. As of December 1, 2010, 40 of the 45 grantees (89%) had submitted their fourth quarter data reports. Thirty (67%) submitted an annual report.

Implementation data. Among the 40 grantees who submitted fourth quarter data, 56% categorized their project status as 'Full Implementation' – that is, all project components are underway as of the last quarter of the first year of implementation. Slightly under half (44%) of the grantees reported that they are in the 'Early Implementation' phase. No grantees reported still being in the 'Planning' or 'Startup' phase, an indication that all projects are progressing well. In the ETAC second quarter reports, 14% of 2009 grantees reported being in the 'Planning' or 'Startup' phases, while only 12% were at 'Full Implementation.' In the following six months, all projects moved into either 'Early Implementation' or 'Full Implementation.'

A review of activities and challenges included in the reports indicates a variety of reasons why some grantees are in early implementation. Most are where they planned to be, others experienced challenges that slowed their implementation plans. Grantees in 'Early Implementation' at the end of the first year include those who have:

- Strategies that include extensive professional development programs in the first year leading to changes in classroom practice in the second year;
- Evaluation procedures that require developing new data collection instruments and/or establishing baseline scores on new instruments in the first year; or
- Outcomes that must be measured beyond the first year, such as increasing graduation rates

Among the unplanned events that delayed full implementation are:

- Extensive staff turnover that required extending the original professional development schedule
- Technology issues, such as incompatibility of new equipment with existing systems, that required additional time for modification

- Reductions in class time, due to system budget cuts or lost school days, that did not allow adequate time in new programs to be able to measure effects in the first year
- Changes in state curriculum or testing requirements that required realigning project components before implementation could proceed

All of the grantees indicated that they have addressed these challenges for the coming year.

Grantees cited technology as the most common challenge throughout the yearlong reporting process. One-third of all grantees (15) reported three major technology challenges in one or more quarters: 1) a network could not initially accommodate the new hardware or software purchased for the project, 2) district staff had to create new mechanisms to track required data in the system, or 3) hardware failures, installation issues, or staff unfamiliarity with programs or equipment delayed implementation.

Outcome data. In the fourth quarter, 2009 grantees provided interim outcome data as one indicator of progress toward their goals. Four grantees reported lack of data for military students resulted from continuing problems in tracking military students, and other grantees have indicated challenges in tracking military students during the first year. Overall, 29 grantees were able to report meeting some or all interim outcome targets for the military population.

Progress toward Goals. Comparing interim outcome measures to targets is not equivalent to project evaluation, and does not provide a complete answer to the question of how well projects are being implemented. Therefore, ETAC asked grantees to characterize progress on each of their goals by responding to the question: "Did you accomplish what you planned in the first year?" This question asked grantees to take into consideration fidelity data (i.e., did they complete all planned activities) and process data (i.e., are they making strategy adjustments to improve outcomes) along with interim outcomes.

Grantees that summarized their progress toward meeting goals included some outstanding successes, particularly in the area of enhancing educational opportunities. Some examples include:

- Bethel School District (WA) has surpassed their three-year targets for reducing the numbers of students (both military and overall) requiring intensive reading interventions.
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (AK) has also passed three-year targets to increase enrollments in AP courses by 30% for military students.
- Harford County Public Schools (MD) had a target of 65% of military students in grades 2-5 achieving math proficiency on state assessments; they reached 84% proficiency in their first year.
- Judson Independent School District (TX) sought only a two-percentage-point increase in 9th and 10th graders achieving proficiency on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills in math, but reached a 4.7% increase for military students and a 2.6% increase overall.

- Lawton Public Schools (OK) surpassed their first year interim goal of increasing science achievement at all grade levels for both the military and the overall population by seven to twenty percentage points, depending on grade level.

These grantees' goals were easier to assess than others because they had fewer outcome targets to track and their strategies were well integrated with each other. Goals which grantees found harder to assess had multiple, varied strategies that generated many outcome and process data points to reconcile. The average number of strategies per goal among all grantees was four; however, some grantees had as few as one strategy to a goal, while one had three goals and a total of 61 strategies. When assessing overall progress, process data from 61 strategies are difficult to summarize effectively. Conversely, having process data from only a single strategy does not always yield sufficient data to determine progress toward a goal, especially where some outcome targets are missed. The grantees that could assess progress on specific goals had smaller numbers of strategies per goal, ranging from three to five. Additionally, these grantees did not have an excessive number of schools involved in the project. The exception is Lawton, which targeted 36 schools, but had well aligned strategies clearly focused on a single goal: increasing science achievement at all school levels. The project director reported that although they met their overall outcome target, not all schools had equal success. They will use fidelity and process data at each school to help determine whether lower gaining schools can improve program elements to achieve higher outcomes.

Program Impact Data. DoDEA requested that the 2009 Grantee Cohort of the K12 Education Partnership Program respond to five questions about the impact of their programs. This information supplemented the quantitative data provided to the Evaluation Technical Assistance Center (ETAC). Of the 45 grantees, 17 or 37.8 percent provided responses. Some responses reiterated outcomes or strategies captured elsewhere. However, many provided insight into how the programs function, and documented significant benefits that were auxiliary to the initial goals. In many cases, these responses demonstrated far-reaching changes to learning environments and communities that have the potential of positively influencing schools into the future.

In summarizing the impact of the DoDEA grant on schools' capacity to ease transition and promote academic achievement among military students, 65% of grantees responding indicated that the grant allowed them to develop and promote services directly to military students' needs. Another 35% felt the grant activities increased awareness of military families' needs in the community.

In assessing the impact of grant activities on all students in the schools, all grantees reported that all students benefited from the educational enhancements. Professional development for teachers and integration of technology into classrooms support academic achievement for all students. Every grant included some of these strategies that enhanced the classroom environment.

Unanticipated benefits of the grant activities included improved student motivation as a result of integrating technology into classrooms and renewed enthusiasm among teachers and administrators focused on student-centered learning.

A complete listing of the qualitative data collected is included in Appendix B.

Annual Evaluation Reports

Annual Evaluation Reports serve two purposes: 1) to examine the extent to which grantees fully utilized all the data collected (fidelity, formative and outcome), and 2) to help evaluate projects in comparable ways despite variability in the types of data generated. A well-documented evaluation can provide evidence for progress even where the more constrained, quantitative outcome measures are conflicting or missing. There was no format specified for these reports by DoDEA in the original grant requirements. Grantees with external evaluators generally provided an annual summary that is based on the original evaluation plan's fidelity, process, and summative questions.

Thirty grantees submitted an Annual Evaluation Report; most reports contained sufficient elements that demonstrated data from the project evaluations. The grantees included some fidelity data outlining the extent to which they implemented program components as planned. All recommended strategy changes to improve progress toward outcomes, although some did not explicitly discuss the process data that justified the recommended changes. Several grantees who did not meet all interim targets or outcome measures were able to provide fidelity or process data to indicate progress toward goals.

Using the evaluation to align fidelity, process and interim outcomes helped San Diego Unified School District (CA) demonstrate that they made adequate progress toward their long-term goals, despite reporting in the fourth quarter that they did not meet all interim targets. The district used fidelity data to show implementation of all year one activities despite delays. Process data provided good indicators of teacher utilization of new technology and student progress in math. These two data sources, combined with recommendations for enhancing implementation next year, predict that San Diego will close many gaps in the coming year.

Harford County Public Schools (MD) presented fidelity data in a concise table of "Indicators of Implementation." They also demonstrated the effectiveness of the various strategies for improving achievement scores by presenting comparisons between overall performances of students participating in different combinations of interventions. Harford County's evaluators presented program modifications to address areas they would like to enhance, including increasing the use of interventions that demonstrated greatest impact on student achievement. Although they did meet their interim targets, they used the analysis as an opportunity to improve services to students.

It is possible that more grantees are using data internally, but not conveying that use effectively in their Annual Evaluation Report. Any use of data would benefit projects, but neglecting an Annual Evaluation Report is truly a missed opportunity. The reports are important tools for informing project improvement and maintaining stakeholder involvement. The two reports summarized above provide an illustration of the benefits of good evaluation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section includes conclusions that emerge from the ETAC data collection efforts for the first year of project implementation for the 2009 cohort.

Project Implementation

Conclusion 1: The majority of grantees implemented all first year planned strategies for enhancing educational opportunities, teacher professional development, and improving student achievement. Those who did not fully implement all aspects of the projects had planned to start some activities at a later date or documented reasons for the project delays. In most cases, these project challenges have been addressed (such as revising professional development schedules or implementing technology upgrades) without altering overall goals. A few projects scaled back outcome targets by projecting only two years of full implementation, or resetting baseline scores because of state-level changes to assessment measures.

> ***Recommendation***: To help close the gaps in programs that are delayed by unplanned circumstances, but have not requested strategy or outcome changes, it is recommended that grantees be individually contacted by appropriate grant support staff. This will help in several ways. First, grant support staff can determine if the projects addressed the delays, even though there is no documentation in an annual report. Second, grant support staff can determine if targeted assistance is needed to address these issues.

ETAC Online Reporting System

Conclusion 2: Grantees experienced many challenges in completing the ETAC online data reporting forms. ETAC staff found that tracking individual activities was not an effective way to represent project implementation for the grantees or for DoDEA.

> ***Recommendation***: Streamline the quarterly reporting. For the 2010 reporting period, the online system will focus on strategy-level information (e.g. PD program as a whole, as opposed to individual sessions or steps), population targets for those strategies (e.g. teachers scheduled to attend PD) and whether strategies require changes or rescheduling for upcoming quarters. Streamlining the system will help

grantees focus on the key data elements they should be tracking for effective program evaluation and will allow ETAC staff to follow up on missing data.

Tracking Data for Military Students

Conclusion 3: Difficulties in tracking military students caused implementation and reporting delays for many grantees. Four grantees still struggle with tracking military student data, which has implications for their ability to assess the outcomes of their projects. The baseline data that grant projects can provide related to the needs of the military students and families is as important as outcome data.

Recommendation: ETAC staff will emphasize the need for projects to prepare for tracking data for military students. The first quarter data collected will include baseline data for any outcomes addressing military students, and individual assistance will be provided to grantees that cannot provide complete data. Information about local solutions to the tracking issue can be shared among grant participants, and with other agencies utilizing this information.

Progress toward Goals

Conclusion 4: More than 50% of the grantees (29 out of 45) report progress toward some or all goals as planned. However, many grantees reported only interim outcomes or lists of activities in the annual reports. Thus, the grantees missed opportunities to identify areas that need strengthening or to determine if adequate progress is being made, despite falling a few points short of interim targets. Sixteen grantees presented some fidelity and process data to more fully analyze the extent of progress.

Based on the activity data submitted to date, it appears that the students and teachers targeted in the original grant proposals receive a variety of services to improve achievement and enhance educational opportunities and professional development. However, it is not yet possible to determine the full impact of these services. The grantees who provided complete information in their annual reports and those responding to the supplemental request for information did demonstrate how they enhanced and improved outcomes for military students and families in the intended focus areas. Based on the population data collected earlier in the year, nearly 80,000 military students are receiving enhanced educational services.

Recommendation: Some projects in the 2009 cohort were too extensive or fragmented to track and assess effectively. It is not possible to reduce the scope of the 2009 grantees' projects; however, changes to the 2010 grant requirements will help reduce this problem for the next cohort. The changes include: limiting the number of goals and strategies in the plan, emphasizing that goals, strategies and outcomes align in the evaluation plans; and requiring annual evaluation reports by external evaluators.

To assist the 2009 grantees in tracking and assessing data going forward, ETAC will realign the online reporting system to match reporting requirements for the 2010 grantees. ETAC will also assist the 2009 grantees with:

- Aggregating some activities under broader strategies for reporting;
- Refining some data collection activities to better meet the reporting requirements;
- Providing additional technical assistance on creating effective annual reports to use for informing project improvement and maintaining stakeholder involvement; and
- Strengthening emphasis on grantee reporting requirements.

Summary

The first year of the DoDEA Military Partnership Grants introduced many new opportunities to military-connected students and their educators across the nation. The projects funded through the grants have brought educational support to raise achievement in core subjects, professional development to provide qualified, competent teachers, and student support services to guarantee that neither base transitions nor socio-emotional issues hinder a student's academic potential. These accomplishments are successfully working toward DoDEA's goal of ensuring the best education for our service members' families.

Quarterly data collection reports show most grantees on track to achieve their grant projects' goals. Additionally, grantees are continually refining and honing both their activities and evaluation plans to seek innovative solutions to project challenges. Moreover, improvements in the online reporting system and capacity building within districts will allow for more accurate and timely data about the projects' impact on military-connected students, their families, and the schools they attend. The accomplishments of the program's first year, as well as the activities planned for 2010-2011, will help the projects become more robust, accountable, and effective in the future.

Appendix A

DoDEA Educational Partnership Grant Program
2009-2010 Semi-Annual Evaluation Report

DoDEA Educational Partnership Grant Program
Semi-Annual Evaluation Report

June 18, 2010

Overview

In 2007, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) received authority in the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act, to work collaboratively with the Department of Education. This initiative, the Educational Partnership Program, is designed to ease military-dependent students' transition from attendance in DoDEA schools to attendance in local education agency (LEA) schools that educate military students. The Educational Partnership Program works with LEAs to ensure that students of military families receive the best possible educational opportunities. This program promotes quality education, seamless transitions, and deployment support for military students through outreach and partnership development. As a part of the Educational Partnership Program, DoDEA supports programs that enhance military-connected LEAs and disseminates information on resources that are available for military-connected LEAs.

2009 Cohort of Educational Partnership Grants

In 2009, DoDEA awarded 45 three-year grants to 44 LEAs[1] to implement projects that will enhance learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development in schools where enrollments include at least 15 percent of students from military families. The LEAs are located in 20 states (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of 2009 Cohort of Educational Partnership Grants

[1] One LEA received two DoDEA grants—one to implement school-based programs and one to create a diagnostic assessment tool for the district teachers and staff.

The grantee projects include 302 PreK-12 schools, but a preliminary analysis of the data revealed four schools[2] do not fit the traditional PreK-12 school model or the evaluation framework. These non-traditional schools were not included in this analysis, resulting in a sample of 298 traditional PreK-12 schools. Table 1 presents general information about the Educational Partnership Grant Program.

Table 1. DoDEA Educational Partnership Program Information

2009 DoDEA Grants	N
Total grants	45
Total competitive grants	38
Total invitational grants	7
Total grant schools	298
Average schools per grant	6.6

Evaluation Technical Assistance Center

To assist with the Educational Partnership Grant Program, DoDEA awarded Synergy Enterprises Inc. (SEI) a contract in September 2009 to provide technical assistance in project and program evaluation. In collaboration with DoDEA, SEI created the Evaluation Technical Assistance Center (ETAC), a technical assistance resource center dedicated to building DoDEA grantees' evaluation capacity. ETAC provides technical assistance in evaluation to grantees through conference workshops, webinars, and telephone and email communications. ETAC also maintains a web site as a mechanism for grantees to report on projects, communicate with other grantees, and access resources and other information. Below are descriptions of technical assistance activities ETAC provided to grantees.

2009 DoDEA Grant Kick-Off Conference

Each grant project director and evaluator attended a grant kick-off conference in Scottsdale, AZ, on December 7-8, 2009, to gather information about managing grants and evaluating projects. The conference included general sessions attended by all participants as well as several small group sessions for project director and evaluator collaboration. ETAC staff was available to help project teams refine project goals and develop plans for evaluating grant activities and outcomes. Grantees attended the following workshops:

[2] These four schools include an on-line high school academy, a career center that includes students outside of K-12, a school within a mental health/substance abuse center, and an administrative center where some professional development is taking place. None provides AYP or aggregate test data, and the three academic programs may include students counted elsewhere in their districts.

- Reviewing Project Goals
- Designing an Evaluation Plan
- Using Evaluation for School and Student Improvement
- Assessment to Promote Learning in Mathematics
- Formative Evaluation in the Language Arts Classroom
- Promising Practices for Conducting Formative Evaluations

Webinars on Grant Reporting

ETAC staff conducted four webinars to provide grantees with guidance on quarterly reporting, to facilitate complete and accurate grant reporting by awardees and DoDEA. The agenda included instructions for (1) accessing the online quarterly report form, (2) completing the quarterly report form, and (3) financial reporting.

Individual Grantee Assistance

ETAC staff provided technical assistance to individual grantees requesting assistance through ETAC email, the toll-free hotline, or the online technical assistance request form. Most requests related to accessing and completing ETAC quarterly reports and using DoDEA's financial reporting system (e.g., Wide Area Work Flow).

In addition, ETAC provided technical assistance in experimental research design to three grantees interested in conducting rigorous evaluations[3]. These rigorous evaluations will help discern the causal impact of these DoDEA grant projects and begin to address the impact of the overall program initiative. Because rigorous evaluations compare the impact on the beneficiaries of a certain policy intervention or project with a group not exposed to the same intervention or project, the results can help inform policy makers on where to allocate scarce resources and can also provide evidence on whether or not current policies are working.

After several communications with the three grantees, ETAC determined that two could successfully implement a rigorous evaluation design. The two grantees—Falcon School District #49 in Colorado and Clover Park School District in Washington—are conducting quasi-experimental matched comparison group designs. Falcon will use propensity score estimates to match the key characteristics of students in grades 3-10 participating in DoDEA grant activities

[3] A rigorous evaluation employs either an experimental or a quasi-experimental design. An experimental design randomly assigns students to participate in project activities or to a control group with students that do not participate in project activities. A quasi-experimental design carefully matches program participants with a comparison group of non-program participants having similar pre-program characteristics. The project evaluator collects valid and reliable data that measure the impact of program participation compared to non-participation before and after program implementation.

with students not participating in grant activities to examine the project effects on students' math achievement. Clover Park will match key characteristics of students participating in DoDEA grant activities with student data from the Northwest Evaluation Association's longitudinal student achievement database to create a virtual control group. This grantee will examine the project effects on students' math and reading achievement for students in grades 4, 7, and 10.

Analysis of Grantee-Reported Data

As an award requirement, grantees must submit web-based quarterly reports on the progress toward implementing the projects and achieving project goals. The grantees submitted the first quarterly report on February 12, 2010 and the second report on April 16, 2010.

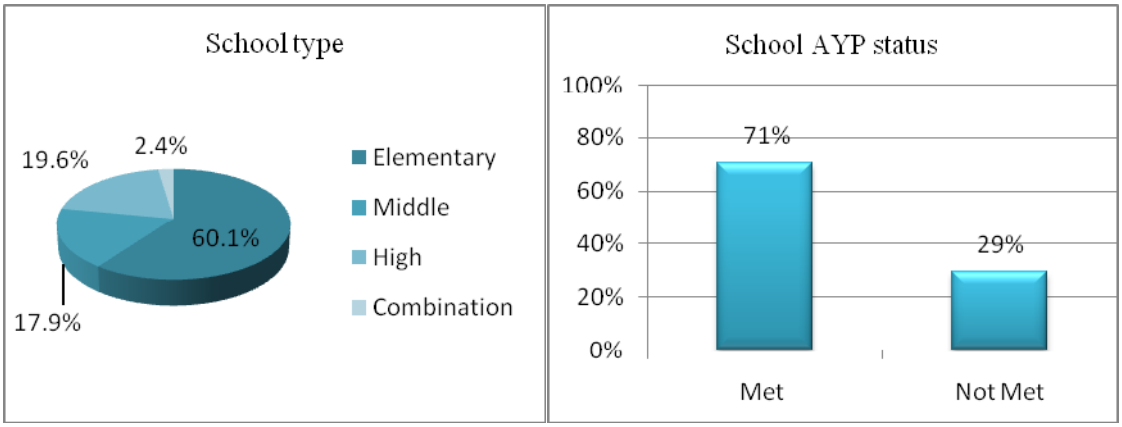
SEI is analyzing the grantee-reported data to determine how grantees implement their projects and how well the Educational Partnership Grant Program is meeting the three goals to: (1) enhance student learning opportunities, (2) increase student achievement, and (3) conduct educator professional development. This report provides a descriptive analysis of the data submitted in the first two quarterly reports. Three evaluation questions guide the report:

1. To what extent are grant activities reaching the target schools and students?
2. How well are grant projects implemented?
3. What lessons learned about grant project implementation will benefit the grant program's management and success?

School Characteristics

The Educational Partnership projects are located across all levels of PreK-12 schools, including combination schools with elementary/middle school grades or with middle/high school grades. As presented in Figure 2, the majority (60%) of the 298 schools in the grant program are elementary schools, and fewer than three percent of the schools are combination schools. About 18 percent of the schools are middle schools and nearly 20 percent are high schools. Nearly 30 percent (N=86) of the schools participating in the grant program did not make their respective states' adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements in school year 2008-09, and about half of these schools are in the School Improvement Program, indicating the schools did not make AYP for two or more consecutive years.

Figure 2. Percentage of DoDEA grant schools by type and AYP status



These data indicate that DoDEA is meeting its priority of awarding grants to low-performing schools in districts that serve military installations experiencing significant military student growth. Additionally, data in Table 2 show that the program provides educational and support services to schools with 189,400 students, of which nearly 41 percent are from military families.

Table 2. Total students receiving grant services by school type

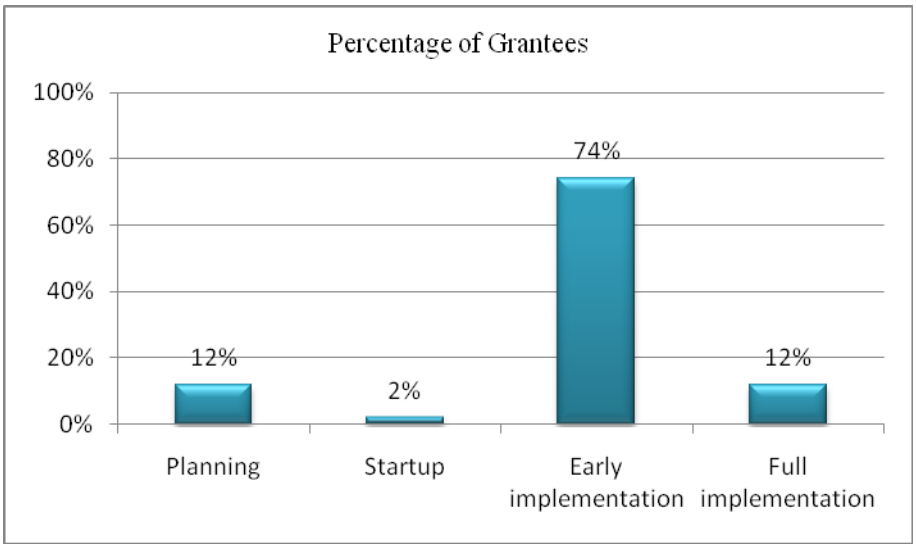
School type	Total students	Military students	Non-military students
Elementary	87,020	49.9%	50.1%
Middle	37,971	37.4%	62.6%
High	59,464	28.9%	71.1%
Combination	4,945	52.1%	47.9%
Total	189,400	40.9%	59.1%

Project Implementation Status

Educational Partnership Grant participants received notification of and began implementing their grant awards by September 1, 2009. As displayed in Figure 3, 33 grantees (74%) reported being in the early implementation phase of their projects after 6 months. This phase indicates that most grantees implemented some planned strategies and/or activities, but have not executed all strategies. Another 5 grantees (12%) indicated they were in full program implementation; these grantees performed or are performing all planned strategies and activities. While most grantees made progress toward executing projects, 5 grantees (12%) are in the

planning phase and 1 grantee (2%) is in the startup phase. Grantees in the planning phase are deciding what to do or how to do it, while those in the startup phase are preparing for implementation (e.g., purchasing equipment/materials and hiring, reassigning, or training staff).

Figure 3. Percentage of grantees by program implementation status



Project Activities by Program Goals

Data show that grantee project goals align with one or more of the DoDEA Educational Partnership Grant goals, indicating the grant program is achieving it purposes of enhancing student learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development. Table 3 shows more grantees plan to enhance student achievement; the primary strategies they are using to achieve this goal involve curriculum/instruction modifications, equipment and material acquisition, family and community engagement, and increased use of data in instruction and decision making. Specifically, 29 grantees are revising or enhancing curriculum/instruction and 18 are integrating new equipment and materials into their programs. Only six grantees indicated they are engaging parents and the community to enhance student achievement

Table 3. Number of grantees by program goal type and strategy type

Goal	Strategy	Number of grantees
Enhance student learning opportunities	Implement credit recovery program	7
	Provide counseling/transition support	4
	Provide expanded learning opportunities beyond school day	10
Enhance student achievement	Revise or enhance curriculum/instruction	29

	Acquire and integrate materials and technology	18
	Engage families and communities	6
	Use data in instruction or decision making	9
Enhance professional development	Train teachers in curriculum/instruction	10
	Train staff in technology use	4
	Train staff in other areas	1

Note: Grantees may be counted in more than one category

To enhance learning opportunities more grantees (N=10) are expanding services beyond the typical school day as a project strategy. These services often include tutoring programs. Additionally, four grantees are implementing student counseling and transitional programs to support military students' mobility between school systems. Credit and time recovery programs are offered to secondary students by seven grantees to help these students graduate on time when their schooling is interrupted because of family deployments and relocation.

Some grantees reported having a project goal of enhancing educator professional development. Ten grantees are achieving this goal through curricular/instructional professional development, which supports grantees' strategies of enhancing student achievement through curriculum/instruction. Four grantees reported implementing professional development to improve technology use, corresponding to grantee reports of acquiring new equipment, typically computers, software, interactive white boards, or web-based programs.

Professional Development Activities

Approximately one third (N=15) of the 44 grantee school districts reported professional development as a distinct project goal. Moreover, nearly all (N=42) have professional development activities as part of their projects in order to achieve goals of improving student achievement or enhancing student learning opportunities. Sixty percent of the 298 schools benefited from professional development activities, with nearly 5000 individuals receiving some type of training.

Waynesville School District (located near Fort Leonard Wood Army Base in Missouri) extensively uses professional development activities to increase student achievement in communication arts and math. Waynesville implemented more than a dozen different professional development activities in the first six months of the project, including workshops that focused on implementing differentiated instruction and improving the use of reading

comprehension strategies for grades 9-12. Professional development also emphasized cognitive coaching and the Missouri Reading Initiative for communication arts teachers of grades 6-8.

Hardin County Schools (near Fort Knox Army Base in Kentucky) conducted professional development to strengthen instructional strategies. Hardin's Response to Instruction (RTI) initiative supports its goals of increasing student achievement in math and reading. RTI helps teachers integrate ongoing assessments of each student's mastery of current classroom material into individualized lesson plans. Nine grantees, or 20 percent, are implementing or expanding RTI initiatives in their programs.

El Paso Independent School District (near Fort Bliss Military Base in Texas) is instituting Professional Learning Communities (PLC) training as professional development in leadership to support its goal of increasing student achievement in science. PLC engages all science teachers in planning collaborative lessons and sharing classroom techniques to meet the needs of all the students. Eleven, or 25 percent, of the grantees include some aspects of PLC organizational planning or training in their programs.

Many grantees are acquiring new technologies to meet their goals. The grantees conduct professional development activities to train teachers to fully utilize the new technologies. Craven County Schools (near MCAS Cherry Point, Camp Lejeune, and New River Air Station in North Carolina) is implementing Scientific Learning Corporation's *Fast ForWord* computer-based literacy program to raise student achievement in reading. The staff participated in professional development programs provided by Scientific Learning. These activities include the use of various modules of *Fast ForWord*, on-site coaching and demonstration lessons, as well as accessing web-based training and a "Virtual Academy". The Virtual Academy helps teachers and administrators continually improve their use of the computer-based literacy program.

Many grantees provide teachers with professional development in using various student assessment and support programs. A popular example of a support program is the *Advancement via Individual Determination* (AVID) program, which is used by four grantees. In addition, grantees purchasing new classroom equipment, such as Smart/Promethean Boards are providing professional development in the use of the equipment.

Implementation Challenges

In the second quarterly report, grantees documented the challenges encountered when implementing projects. The four types of challenges include

- Programming challenges that include specific issues with implementing a curriculum/instructional program or student support program;

- Administrative challenges focus on operational tasks, such as staffing, equipment/material acquisition, or technology infrastructure;
- Financial challenges encountered due to insufficient funding to fully implement the proposed projects; and
- Accountability challenges that relate to program monitoring, evaluation, and analyses as well as protocol development and data collection.

Below are illustrative challenges and solutions presented in each category.

Programming Challenges

- Identifying effective programs. A grantee had difficulty identifying appropriate activities for their afterschool programs. They now have found a format that will work and replaced the program director. Another grantee did not have an appropriate reading intervention for intermediate students. This grantee will now use *ReadAbout* for the intermediate students. Staff of another grant project has not yet identified a reliable and convenient K-12 diagnostic program. This grantee is researching available products and intends to purchase of K-12 diagnostic software for school year 2010-11.
- Gaining staff support. One grantee reported difficulty gaining the staff‘s support for the project. This grantee increased the teachers’ understanding of the project’s instructional components and made connections to existing instructional practices to increase staff support. Another grantee had support from administrators regarding professional development and professional learning communities, but the administrators were less supportive of the project’s transitional support services.
- Engaging parents. Several grantees had difficulty engaging parents in the projects; however, only one grantee seemed to have a possible solution for engaging parents. This grantee used a variety of formats to entice parents to become involved in parent education workshops and offered multi-session workshops utilizing the *Love and Logic Parent® Curriculum* as well as offering "free prize" books to all parents who completed all sessions. While these activities resulted in increased parental engagement, it was substantially less than the grantee expected.
- Student attendance. Several grantees experienced challenges in maintaining students’ participation in supplemental instructional courses. In one project, student attrition in *Aventa Online AP* courses is increasing, and the grantee is currently considering options to increase student support options. Another project is experiencing poor student attendance in a credit and time recovery program, but the grantee has not identified ways to improve student attendance.

Administrative Challenges

- Obtaining qualified staff. Grantees are having difficulty staffing their programs. For example, one grantee could not identify sufficient numbers of tutors, at the secondary school-level, for the afterschool remediation program in math and reading. This grantee plans to look to the broader community to help provide qualified tutors and use *Link Crew* to provide some tutors. Another grantee had delays in processing the paperwork to hire Resource Teachers.

- Establishing technology infrastructure. Several grantees reported challenges with the technology infrastructures of their schools. Web-based curricular programs did not work properly because several schools did not have a high bandwidth Internet connection. This grantee plans to purchase Internet service with stronger connectivity. Some classrooms in a grantee's schools were not wired for technology use. These classes should be wired by the next school year. A main challenge of one grantee was the installation of mini notebooks and the new math programs because the district server could not support them.

- Acquiring equipment/materials. Grantees experienced delays in purchasing project equipment and materials because the central office must approve all purchases and the approval processes can be slow. Additionally, schools must use district approved vendors for purchases and the vendors did not always have the products the grantees needed. In one instance, project schools provided students with basic supplies; however, some buildings could afford the supplies and some could not. This grantee is considering a supply fund.

Financial Challenges

- Experiencing reduction in resources. A grantee reported that budget, staff, and resource reductions adversely impacts the district and site administrators' capacity to dedicate sustained blocks of time towards fulfilling all of the grant's activities. This grantee is considering requesting DoDEA's assistance in funding a grant manager position to reduce central and site office burden. Many states face massive budget deficits that are being passed onto schools. One grantee is facing a $19 million dollar budget shortfall next year, and is concerned about maintaining its focus on instruction and high staff morale. Another grantee reported that its funds were cut in December 2009, affecting all budgets in the district.

Accountability Challenges

- Establishing accountability protocols. Creating a format for teacher accountability for those staff members participating in professional development academies has been somewhat challenging for one grantee. Teachers are not entering online postings to share with others in the community as intended. The grantee is considering a different

sharing format that requires less time since teachers indicated that finding time for the data entry was a challenge to posting information.

- Developing monitoring process. Developing a monitoring process that ensures resources are properly targeting the right students and achieving the goals necessary for student success was reported as a challenge by a grantee but no possible solution was included.

- Analyzing and reporting data. One grantee reported it is easy to collect data, but challenging to recruit staff to analyze and summarize data for data-driven instruction. This prevents the grantee from assessing program instructional activities. Several grantees indicated that the required quarterly reporting to DoDEA is time consuming, particularly when staff is over burdened with responsibilities.

- Collecting data on military student achievement. Neither the US Department of Education, nor the majority of LEAs currently mandate identifying students as 'military' or 'non-military' for reporting purposes. While a simple count of military students is possible from other sources, it is necessary to find a way to 'tag' electronic school and test records in order to be able to analyze outcome data by these two groups. Some schools have the capacity to add this to their own record systems, but several had to request that changes be made in system-level data tracking systems, which requires resources and time they did not anticipate at the start of the program.

Summary Findings by Research Question

This semi-annual report summarizes the characteristics of the 2009 DoDEA Educational Partnership grantees, and assesses how well the grantees are implementing their programs and how well the grant program is meeting its purposes of enhancing student learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development. The following section presents the findings by research questions.

Research Question One: To what extent are grant activities reaching the target schools and students?

The DoDEA Educational Partnership Grant program is successfully reaching its target schools and students. The program supports 44 school districts and 298 schools, serving 48 military installations. Nearly 30 percent (N=86) of the schools are low-performing schools and about half of these schools are in the School Improvement Program. This indicates DoDEA is meeting its priority of awarding grants to low-performing schools in districts that serve 19 of the 22 military installations experiencing significant military student growth as well as 26 other installations. The program serves schools with a total of 189,400 students in PreK-12 schools, and 77,447 (41%) of these students are from military families.

Research Question Two: How well are grant projects being implemented?

During the first six months of the grant program, grantees are generally implementing their projects as planned. Thirty-eight grantees are in the early phase or full phase of project implementation, and another two grantees are preparing to implement projects by purchasing equipment and materials, hiring or reassigning staff, and training staff. Only five grantees reported that they are still planning how to implement their projects. However, the five grantees that reported being in the planning phase of the project had the following challenges:

- purchasing required equipment and material;
- setting up computer hardware, software, and Internet connectivity because of archaic infrastructures;
- hiring sufficient project staff; and
- identifying appropriate instructional and support programs that matched student needs.

Research Question Three. What lessons were learned about grant project implementation that will benefit the grant program's management and success?

Grantees generally implemented their projects as planned; some are experiencing challenges that can be resolved with targeted technical assistance. Targeted assistance would include information for engaging parents and the community; help with program monitoring, evaluation, and analysis; and guidelines for identifying and selecting appropriate instructional and support programs that meet students' needs.

Grant projects vary across the program; some projects have concise goals and research-based strategies and some projects have broad goals and endless activities. Additionally, some projects include as many as 36 schools across different types of schools. The wide variation in the grant projects suggest the program is too broad, encouraging projects to fold DoDEA funds into general educational programs.

For the 2010 Cohort, DoDEA defined and narrowed the grant focus, and conducted an external review process to facilitate a stronger cohort of grantees. However, the primary goals of the grant program continue to be enhancing student learning opportunities, student achievement, and professional development—goals common to most educational programs. DoDEA should consider further goal clarification to define the quality and types of projects that would best serve students and families in the military (e.g., more research-based projects proven to mitigate low student performance stemming from high mobility, transition, and stress of deployment).

ETAC Next Steps

The following recommendations are based on the analysis findings and represent the primary areas in which grantees need additional technical assistance to implement and evaluate their projects.

- Encourage use of ETAC web-based resources. The ETAC staff has been focused on providing assistance with building grantees evaluation capacity. However, the discussion forum provided on the website would be ideal for grantees to share solutions for challenges cited by grantees, such as increasing stakeholders buy-in, increasing parent engagement, and selecting training providers. In addition to coordinating discussion forums, ETAC staff can populate the Resource Page of the ETAC web site with literature in various project implementation areas and create fact sheets to address common informational needs.

- Clarify data definitions. ETAC can help reduce the reporting burden on grantees by clearly defining how 'activities' and 'challenges' should be reported. Currently, several grantees are making dozens of entries that could be entered as a single activity. For example, multiple sessions of a single Professional Development should be entered as a single activity.

- Clarify unit of analysis. Many grantees are implementing both grantee-wide and individual school initiatives in their projects and comingling the data of these initiatives in the quarterly reports. This can cause problems for grantees in compiling accurate data to answer their evaluation questions. Therefore, encouraging grantees to report progress data by school will provide a consistent unit of analysis across grant projects, making it easier to make school comparisons within and across grants and evaluate the overall program.

This semi-annual report describes how LEAs are implementing their DoDEA grant projects, including project activities and implementation progress and challenges. The next report will present the outcomes that grantees have documented a year after implementing their projects. The expectation is that most grantees will include student achievement data in math, reading, and/or science to demonstrate the effect of the projects. Additionally, some grantees should report on the demonstrated outcomes of their student support programs (e.g., transition programs and credit recovery programs).

To help grantees prepare for annual reporting, ETAC will use the information in this report as well as data from a needs assessment to develop and deliver webinars in instituting evaluation data collection systems, validating, cleaning, and analyzing data, and evaluation reporting. ETAC will continue working with the two rigorous evaluation grantees to help them finalize their research and sampling designs, collect valid and reliable data, develop appropriate analytic models, and accurately report the findings, including effect size, which measures the magnitude of the intervention or treatment.

Appendix A

Grantees by Military Installations Served and Number and Type of Schools

Grantees by state, LEA, military installation served, and number and type of school

State	LEA	Installations Served	Number of Schools Served				
			Elementary	Middle	High	Combination[1]	Total
Alaska							
	Fairbanks North Star	Fort Wainwright Eielson AFB		2	2	1	5
Arizona							
	Tucson USD	Davis-Monthan AFB	1				1
California							
	Coronado USD	Naval Base Coronado	2	1	2		5
	Morongo USD	MCB 29 Palms	11	2	4		17
	Oceanside USD	Camp Pendleton	3	1			4
	San Diego USD	**Naval Station San Diego**	5	2	1		8
	Silver Valley USD	**Fort Irwin**	3	1	1		5
Colorado							
	Academy District 20	**Ft. Carson** Schriever AFB Peterson AFB Air Force Academy Falcon AFB	13	4	5	1	23
	Falcon SD 49	**Ft. Carson**	2	2	2		6
	Fountain-Fort Carson SD 8	**Ft. Carson,** Schriever AFB, Peterson AFB, Cheyenne Mt AF Station Air Force Academy	3	1	1		5
	Harrison SD 2	Ft. Carson Schriever AFB Peterson AFB	2				2
Georgia							
	Bryan County Schools	Fort Stewart Military Reservation Hunter Army Air Field	2				2
	Chattahochee County SD	**Fort Benning**			1		1
	Muscogee County SD	**Fort Benning**	6	2	3		11
Hawaii							
	Hawaii Department of Education	**Schofield Barracks** Wheeler Airfield Wahiawa Naval Station	5	1	1		7

[1]Combination schools include elementary/middle schools and middle/high schools
Note: Bold text represent military installations experiencing significant military student growth, 2007-09, per the Report to Congress (March 2008

Grantees by state, LEA, military installation served, and number and type of school (continued)

State	LEA	Installations Served	Number of Schools Served				
			Elementary	Middle	High	Combination[1]	Total
Kansas							
	Derby SD	**McConnell AFB**	1				1
	Geary County USD	Fort Riley	6	2	1		9
	Manhattan-Ogden SD	Fort Riley	3	1			4
Kentucky							
	Hardin County Schools	**Fort Knox**	7	3	2		12
Louisiana							
	Vernon Parish SD	**Fort Polk**	2	2	1	1	6
Maryland							
	Harford County PS	Aberdeen Proving Ground	1				1
Mississippi							
	Long Beach SD	NCB Gulfport Keesler AFB		1	1		2
Missouri							
	Waynesville SD	**Fort Leonard Wood**	7	1	1		9
New Mexico							
	Clovis Municipal Schools	**Cannon AFB**	4				4
New York							
	Carthage CSD	Fort Drum	3	1	1		5
	Indian River SD	Fort Drum	6				6
North Carolina							
	Craven County Schools	MCAS Cherry Point **Camp Lejeune** MCAS New River Air Station	8	3	2		13
	Cumberland County SD	**Fort Bragg** Pope AFB	5	2	1		8
	Onslow County SD	**Camp Lejeune** MCAS New River Air Station Camp Geiger, Camp Johnson			7		7

[1]Combination schools include elementary/middle schools and middle/high schools
Note: Bold text represent military installations experiencing significant military student growth, 2007-09, per the Report to Congress (March 2008

Grantees by state, LEA, military installation served, and number and type of school (continued)

State	LEA	Installations Served	Number of Schools Served				
			Elementary	Middle	High	Combination[1]	Total
Oklahoma							
	Cache Public Schools	**Fort Sill**	2	1	2		5
	Elgin Public Schools	**Fort Sill**		1	1		2
	Lawton PS	**Fort Sill**	28	4	4		36
Tennessee							
	Clarksville-Montgomery	**Fort Campbell**	10	5	4	1	20
Texas							
	Comal ISD	**Joint Base San Antonio**	1		1		2
	El Paso ISD	**Fort Bliss**	6	1	1		8
	Judson ISD	**Joint Base San Antonio**			1		1
	Lackland ISD	Lackland AFB	1			1	2
	Northside ISD	Lackland AFB Kelly AFB **Joint Base San Antonio**	5	1			6
	Randolph Field SD	**Joint Base San Antonio** Brooks AFB	1	1	1		3
	Fort Sam Houston ISD	**Fort Sam Houston** Camp Bullis **Joint Base San Antonio**	1			1	2
Virginia							
	Hopewell City PS	**Fort Lee**	1				1
	Prince George County PS	**Fort Lee**		1			1
Washington							
	Bethel County SD	**Joint Base Lewis - McChord**	2	1			3
	Clover Park SD	**Joint Base Lewis - McChord**	11	2	3	1	17
Totals							
	44	48 (unduplicated)	180	53	58	7	298

[1]Combination schools include elementary/middle schools and middle/high schools
Note: Bold text represent military installations experiencing significant military student growth, 2007-09, per the Report to Congress (March 2008

Appendix B

Responses from FY2009 Cohort of Partnership Grantees about the Impact of Grant Funds

Summary

Responses from FY2009 Cohort of Partnership Grantees about the Impact of Grant Funds

Overview

DoDEA requested that the 2009 Grantee Cohort of the K12 Education Partners Program respond to five questions about the impact of their programs. This information supplemented the quantitative data provided to the Evaluation Technical Assistance Center (ETAC) about increases in student achievement and academic opportunity. The five questions included:

1. Summarize the impact of the DoDEA grant on your capacity to contribute to easing transition and promoting academic achievement among military students.

2. How has the DoDEA grant helped your LEA carry out academic-related goals and objectives for all students?

3. Describe any unanticipated successes or outcomes affecting military students and/or their families because of the DoDEA funding. Include, if applicable, your project's pans to make program changes that permanently integrate these outcomes.

4. If applicable, how has the grant facilitated or contributed to bringing additional resources to your project. What did the additional funds allow you to do?

5. How has the grant facilitated new partnerships that benefit military students and families, or how has the grant changed the role of an existing partner(s)?

Of the 45 grantees, 17 or 37.8 percent provided responses. Some responses reiterated outcomes or strategies captured elsewhere. However, many provided insight into how the programs function, and documented significant benefits that were auxiliary to the initial goals. In many cases, these responses demonstrated far-reaching changes to learning environments and communities that have the potential of positively influencing schools into the future.

Below is a summary of the grantees' responses for each question.

Response Summaries

Question 1: Summarize the impact of the DoDEA grant on your capacity to contribute to easing transition and promoting academic achievement among military students.

Eleven respondents (e.g., Carthage, Comal, and Vernon Parish) noted that participation in this grant program allowed them to develop and promote services directly to military students. The curriculum enhancements benefited all students in a classroom; however, many grantees addressed the education gaps that military students experience with targeted tutoring and credit recovery programs. Funding co-curricular programs on the military base or transportation for base students to school programs with grant monies also helped target academic enhancements to military students. Seven respondents, including those from Comal, Derby, Geary, Lawton, Northside, Randolph Field, and San Diego noted that they initiated projects to develop transferable skills (e.g., self-advocacy, collaboration, and 21st Century technology competence) for military students if, or when, they moved again.

Six respondents (e.g., Judson, Comal, and San Diego) said that the project helped them to increase the awareness of the military community and students' needs and improved many of the schools' response to military students. Grantees from Lawton, Randolph Field, Carthage, Judson, Lackland, Prince George County (VA), and San Diego developed outreach and support programs for military families that positively influenced the needs of students and their parents and helped them integrate into the communities.

Question 2: How has the DoDEA grant helped your LEA carry out academic-related goals and objectives for all students?

All 17 respondents stated that instructional enhancements supported and benefitted all students in their schools. The major enhancement included professional development that focused on curriculum/instructional improvements. This helped teachers acquire enhanced skill to improve the classroom learning experience for all children. Many grants, including San Diego, focused professional development on Response to Instruction (RtI) which helps teachers design instruction specifically for each student's needs.

Nine respondents indicated that the structures (e.g., coaching models, mentor programs, and the Professional Learning Communities) support professional development and will be sustained and continue into the future. The Professional Learning Communities are venues for teachers to collaborate on lesson plans, provide feedback to each other and share research and experience to improve classroom practice on a continuous basis. Lawton is using funds to create teacher-developed Resource Guides.

Six respondents (e.g., Randolph Field, Muscogee, Comal, Judson, Carthage, and Bryan) purchased technology to enhance academic programs and benefit both students and teachers. Grantees cited how the enhanced technology is helping teachers use data-driven instruction in

the classroom. This is changes the schools' culture and is spreading beyond programs supported by the grant.

Bryan said that data-driven instruction aligns with their overall school improvement plans. Muscogee indicated their high school reached the standard of 'Recognized' in their state for the first time. Northside commented that their state is switching to a new standardized test in 2011, and because DoDEA is requiring an evaluation of the grant processes and outcomes, they already have data to assess what areas they must address to meet the new standards.

The grantee from Geary reported that grant activities and programs benefit not only military students, but also other at-risk students. They particularly mentioned that ongoing formative assessments have shown the need to target additional programs (e.g., extra-curricular programs) for ELL students, a group that included many military students.

Question 3: Describe any unanticipated successes or outcomes affecting military students and/or their families because of the DoDEA funding. Include, if applicable, your project's pans to make program changes that permanently integrate these outcomes.

This question elicited the most varied and excited responses. Some response focused on changes in attitudes including: increased military student confidence or motivation; increased engagement of military families in their children's academics and the school community; and improvement in the entire school culture because of the emphasis on rigorous academics.

Northside and Vernon Parish discussed benefits to the school or the school system that included developing a strong cohort of Principals to implement the grant project. The principals continue to work together and identify solutions to other challenges. These principals expanded their role as instructional leaders; increased the awareness of military family needs at non-grant funded schools in the LEA; and redirected all teachers' focus to student centered learning. Muscogee cited other benefits that included implementing iPod technology in math classes. This project director described the enthusiasm and motivation that both teachers and students have for the iPods. Some teachers are discovering a broad spectrum of educational uses for the devices. Muscogee also expressed how the LEA is using technological devices because the state is developing a K-12 iTunes "university" that will provide access to academic programs and applications via Apple technology.

Comal discussed how developing a method to track military students for the grant project resulted in the LEAs attention to the presence of reserve and National Guard connected students. Because of the requirement to track military students for the grant, the LEA began tracking students whose parents deployed during the school year to address the students' changing needs.

Three respondents cited academic successes beyond the subject areas addressed by the project. Derby cited a 25% increase in student success rate for standard of excellence in their state. In Lakeland, all 8th grade students achieved mastery level on a state test of Technology

Application. Muscogee said that an elementary school received the Mayor's award for creative and innovative techniques to improve academic performance of special needs students.

There were some interesting benefits for specific groups as well. Lackland found that a greenhouse started with grant funds not only enhanced the science program, but also is a motivation for students with severe learning differences. "The greenhouse has a calming affect on students, offers a "level playing field for all students," and often is used as a behavior incentive." Derby noted from the parental feedback that the science fair sponsored by the grant was 'best science fair ever' held at the school. Harford talked about unexpectedly finding that the new math program benefited highly able students in a math competition program and targeted low-performing students. Lawton noted that a recreation club for teenagers started on base as part of the grant was "a fabulous success'. Another grantee noted that incredible 'memory making moments' for military-connected students and their parents occurred on a summer science enhancement program's camping trip funded by the grant.

Question 4: If applicable, how has the grant facilitated or contributed to bringing additional resources to your project. What did the additional funds allow you to do?

This question caused some confusion among respondents. Many included the products purchased with the grant funds; some reported new resources.

Seven grantees (e.g., Randolph Field, Carthage, and San Diego) cited using grant funds to enhance system-wide activities such as:

- Enhancing technology to facilitate communication or track data for the grant activities;
- Committing fiscal resources to expand successful programs to non-grant schools;
- Adding a bus route to accommodate an afterschool tutoring program;
- Funding additional counseling services for military students based on grant-assessed needs;
- Providing a room with computer access at each grant-funded school to help military parents find resources and to conduct parent-teacher conference via Skype for deployed personnel (San Diego).

Lawton, Carthage, and Price George County (VA) discussed how they leveraged grant funds to increase the support for military-connect students and their families. These activities include:

- Obtaining additional support from their military base including a financial match to sponsor an extended summer program
- Providing space (including supervision and security) for after school programs
- Leveraging additional resources from the YMCA to conduct an afterschool program (Carthage) and a local museum for a science enrichment program (Derby).

Several grantees leveraged DoDEA funds to by obtaining additional resources through grants from the Success for All Foundation, the IDEA American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the

Military Child Education Coalition, the Joint Ventures Education Forum Military Curriculum grant, and a local Partnerships in Education program. One grantee even noted that they are receiving additional services from a vendor to supplement the access and training purchased using grant funds.

Question 5: How has the grant facilitated new partnerships that benefit military students and families, or how has the grant changed the role of an existing partner(s)?

Many respondents reiterated what they offered for previous questions. Eleven noted enhanced working relationships with the adjacent military base, military families, military-school-parent coalitions, and School Liaison Officers. These collaborations strengthened communication, enhanced service delivery strategies, increased awareness of and access to resources available to military families, and augmented joint programs such as mentoring. Carthage, Derby, and Lackland began partnerships with local Universities to provide evaluation services or professional development programs. These partnerships led to ongoing relationships that will benefit teachers and provide additional enrichment programs to students. San Diego reported that the local Kiwanis Club started a student leadership/community service program at the elementary school level to help military students develop a sense of community belonging.

Appendix C

Challenges Encountered

Challenges in Reporting Interim Outcomes

Among the 40 reports submitted, 21 were missing outcome data for some or all goals. In some cases, this was due to delays at the state level in processing or disseminating state-wide test scores, while others did not measure certain outcomes because they did not fully implement all project components.

ETAC staff noted that projects that cited more than three goals, targeted more than 10 schools, more than one content foci areas, or more than the average number (10.5) of strategies had the most difficulty completing planned data collection activities to assess progress. Projects that exceeded the average number of data elements and activities often listed among their project challenges using the ETAC online reporting system.

Challenges in Assessing Progress toward Goals

In general, among the grantees that submitted fourth quarter data, there is variability and lack of specificity in how grantees assessed progress toward goals for the following reasons:

- The original projects covered multiple subjects, grade levels, and outputs for the same overall goals. Thus, grantees became confused when:
    - Goals targeting multiple subjects showed improvement in some areas but not others (e.g., benchmarks achieved for math but not reading);
    - Goals targeting multiple grade levels or schools showed improvement in some areas but not others (e.g., benchmarks achieved for elementary but not secondary students); or
    - Goals targeting military students and one or more additional subgroups (e.g., English language learners, at-risk students) showed improvements for some subgroups but not others.
- The online data collection forms continue to be a challenge for the grantees. In completing the form, many grantees repeated the goal for each outcome measure and answered the question about progress toward each goal multiple times. This often resulted in the question about progress toward a single goal being marked both 'yes' and 'no.'
- In some cases, the grantees did not demonstrate how methodologically sound measures assessed or pertained to the project's benchmarks or interim goals. For instance, one grantee collected less than half of the planned outcome data and failed to meet the majority of the benchmarks on the data they could report. However, this grantee stated that they accomplished what they planned for the first year.

Challenges in assessing project implementation

Thirty grantees submitted some type of Annual Evaluation Report. However, in the absence of format and content guidelines, these, like the fourth quarter reports, varied greatly in content and quality. In the absence of both consistent outcome data and a formal Annual Report, it is not possible to make general conclusions about how well a grantee is

implementing plans, or whether grantees are making adequate progress toward their final goals. The most common problems included:

- Neglecting to use the evaluation questions as the framework for assessing progress;
- Using anecdotal evidence to justify process changes or to impute progress toward goals;
- Failing to include data other than the (sometimes conflicting) interim outcomes in the report; and
- Presenting tables of data collected with no discussion of how they addressed the evaluation questions or changes proposed for year two of the project.