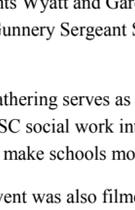


Welcome to the first edition of the *Building Capacity* newsletter! Each month we will highlight what is happening as part of the *Building Capacity* project in our partner school districts and at USC. We will also share interesting news stories about military families in addition to resources that support military children attending civilian public schools. Check our [Website](#) often for other news and updates. To share ideas that you think should be included in future newsletters, contact Linda Jackson, linda.jackson@usc.edu.

Visit Our Website:
buildingcapacity.usc.edu



Healthy Kids Survey Delivered to Schools

The 2011 [California Healthy Kids Survey](#) (CHKS), featuring the new **military module**, has been delivered to all of the schools in the eight districts that are part of *Building Capacity*. The new module will provide data on how military students feel about their schools and about having a parent serving in the Armed Forces. It will also provide important insight into how military students feel about themselves, whether they perceive their schools to be friendly and supportive, and if they think their families are respected by the adults in their schools.

Administering this module as part of the CHKS is the first step toward better understanding the needs of military students and making schools more aware of their academic, social and emotional needs.

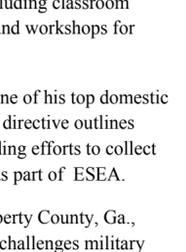
The CHKS is administered in every school district in California, providing policymakers and educators with valuable information on school climate and student trends regarding exposure to drugs, violence, bullying and other factors that affect student learning. The survey is administered by WestEd for the California Department of Education.

The CHKS is just one piece the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey. The system also includes the new California School Parent Survey and the California School Climate Survey, which is taken by school staff. Together, all three components help schools meet the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now up for reauthorization. For more information on the CHKS, the parent survey and the staff survey, visit <http://chks.wested.org/>.

Fallbrook Union School Holds Valentine's Day Lunch for Marine Families

S an Onofre School, located on the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base, showed love for members of the military at a Valentine's Day luncheon organized by the school's PTA.

Approximately 80 parents and grandparents responded to the invitation to "Eat Lunch with Your Favorite Valentine," including wives of Marines who are deployed and dads from the base. Students Wyatt and Garrett, pictured here, were joined by their dad, Gunnery Sergeant Steve Oldham. He will be deploying next week.



The gathering serves as an example of the kinds of the activities that our partnership schools and USC social work interns are organizing to show their appreciation for military families and to make schools more welcoming and supportive.

The event was also filmed by a crew from the Quantico, Va.-based [Wounded Marine Careers Foundation](#) for a podcast that will be featured on [Military.com](#). The foundation trains disabled servicemen to become filmmakers and storytellers, helping them to transition to employment following their military service.

Dr. Ron Astor Attends White House Meeting

In late January, Dr. Ron Astor, *Building Capacity* principal investigator, met with senior Obama Administration officials to discuss proposals for involving university schools of education in better preparing educators to support military students. The gathering brought together representatives from the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, branches of the military, and the offices of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Building Capacity was highlighted for its variety of components, including classroom instruction, school placements for Master's of Social Work interns, and workshops for parents and school staff.

President Obama has made increasing support for military families one of his top domestic priorities. His recently released [Strengthening Our Military Families](#) directive outlines plans for improving educational services for military children, including efforts to collect and report data to promote transparency about student performance as part of ESEA.

And earlier this month, Dr. Biden toured an elementary school in Liberty County, Ga., where she met with teachers, counselors and others to talk about the challenges military children face. Her [visit](#) was covered by WTOG in Savannah.

News Articles Feature Issues Important to Military Children

Here are a few of the stories we recently featured on our website:

["Staying in Touch With Home, for Better or Worse"](#) appeared in *The New York Times* and discussed the pros and cons of soldiers using technology to keep in touch with family members and stay involved in issues at home.

["School Enrollment Priority for Military Children Clears House"](#) appearing in the *Cibola Beacon*, focused on proposed legislation in New Mexico that would allow children of active duty or National Guard personnel who have been relocated due to a parent's deployment to receive first priority placement in the school they wish to keep attending.

Questions, comments or to unsubscribe, E-mail us at raastor@usc.edu