University of Southern California

USC

Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools

September 2011

Building Capacity Team Prepares for Busy Second Year

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'Touching Base'

Check out the latest edition of "Touching Base," the U.S. Department of Education's quarterly newsletter focusing on quality education for military dependent children. In this issue, First Lady Michelle Obama speaks at a high school

With the new school year now in session, the *Building Capacity* consortium is undergoing several changes in order to provide support to as many military students and military-connected schools as possible.

back to school

With the involvement of additional university partners, *Building Capacity* is truly becoming a regional project.

First, San Diego State University (SDSU) will also be placing its MSW interns in military-connected schools that are part of the eight-district consortium. Together, SDSU and USC are expected to have over 55 graduate level interns in schools, where they will be learning skills to work with military families and providing a variety of needed services. The interns are expected to log over 20,000 hours of programming and support services to schools this year.

Next, the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) is also joining this effort by involving undergraduate students who are part of the university's Partners at Learning (PAL) program. In PAL, undergraduates earn course credit and training while providing mentoring and tutoring services to under-served students in pre-K through 12th grade. In partnership with USC, UCSD will provide the PAL participants with a course on military culture so they can better understand the challenges military students are facing. Then they will be placed in schools to provide academic tutoring. The successful PAL program has been in existence for many years but this is the first time it will focus on military-connected public schools. UCSD will work with USC and the districts to place between 75 and 100 undergraduate students in the consortium school districts.

graduation ceremony in Quantico, Va., the Joining Forces initiative is highlighted, and Dr. Jill Biden holds a community college summit, emphasizing their role in educating veterans and their families.

Keep Us Posted

With the new school year underway, let us know what is happening in your schools and communities to support the educational needs of military students. Send ideas for the newsletter to Linda Jackson at linda.jackson@usc.edu

USC will also work with the consortium districts, the MSW students, and the school liaison officers for the Navy and the Marines to open "transition" rooms in schools with high proportions of military students. These rooms, which provide services to help students and parents quickly acclimate to their new school and community, are modeled after centers that already exist in the San Diego Unified School District. Click here for the Navy's guide on how to create such a program. These transition rooms, along with the Navy's Family Readiness Express, can improve access to services for families by making them available in the schools.

Finally, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) will be involved in *Building Capacity* in two ways. First, the School of Medicine will train the graduate students and pupil personnel staff from the school districts to implement a school-based, modified component of the FOCUS curriculum. FOCUS, which stands for Families OverComing Under Stress, helps military families deal with the issues of deployment, reintegration and changing family relationships. This training will expand the capacity of schools to support hundreds of military students coping with a parent's or a sibling's deployment.

Secondly, UCLA's Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science's online tutoring program is being made available for free to up to 10 middle and high schools in the *Building Capacity* consortium. Through this program, which is supported by the Broadcom communications company, students post questions on a website and receive answers within 24 hours from UCLA engineering students. The engineering school is eager to support military students and work with math and science teachers who are interested in using this program to supplement their teaching.

The availability of these training opportunities, additional students and tutoring programs will make for an exciting second year as the *Building Capacity* schools continue to serve as a model for supporting the educational and social-emotional needs of military children.

Spotlight On: Kelli May and Shannon Milder

In this issue, we begin a new monthly feature in which we introduce readers to someone affiliated with the *Building Capacity* project. Individuals will include superintendents of the school districts in the consortium, school principals , Master's of Social Work interns, USC faculty and staff, members of our advisory committee and others who are supporting military children in public schools.

In our first spotlight we feature our regional school liaison officers who work tirelessly to improve educational opportunities for military children and remove barriers that stand in the way of students being successful. The military school liaison officers have developed and implemented numerous effective programs in schools throughout the region. *Building Capacity* is partnering with them to expand and bring to scale many of the locally effective programs across the consortium. We hope that these can be expanded nationally for all military-connected schools. These leaders make a huge difference in the lives of military students.

Shannon Milder and **Kelli May** are important links between the schools in the *Building Capacity* consortium and the military installations in the San Diego area. Their mission is to make sure military children receive the best education possible—regardless of their unique lifestyles.

Kelli, left, serves as the regional school liaison for Marine Corps Installations West. While she is stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in San Diego, she is responsible for coordinating K-12 educational services for military children in the areas of seven Marine Corps installations across Arizona and California.

Kelli has an elementary education teaching degree from the University of West Florida and has taught in elementary schools in five states and overseas with the Department of Defense. In 2008, she earned a Master's in Educational Leadership with a school administration credential from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix. Kelli has worked in private practice as an educational advocate and consultant for students with disabilities, but also finds serving military families especially rewarding. Before taking the position as Regional School Liaison, she was an Installation School Liaison at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Kelli says she enjoys working with various stakeholders to maximize educational opportunities for children by reducing the barriers often experienced as part of the transitional lifestyle of the military.

A former aviation maintenance officer for the Navy, Shannon, right, is the regional school liaison officer (SLO) for the Navy Region Southwest. As a SLO, she helps to coordinate supportive services for school-aged children in military families across the bottom six states in the Southwest.

Shannon has a degree in secondary education from the University of Scranton. After serving in the Navy for nearly five years, she earned a Master's in counseling and human relations from Villanova University.

She says she is honored to work with the "dedicated and passionate school liaison officers" in this region. "When they report back to me that they successfully assisted a family with a smooth transition, so their school-aged children started school without a hiccup and were joined up with a sponsor for their first day of school, it reinforces (at the grass-roots level) why I love what I do," she says.

FEATURED RESOURCE: Materials for Commemorating Sept. 11 Anniversary

With the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Flight 93 approaching, teachers and counselors may be looking for resources that can assist them in addressing these tragedies in their classrooms. The Families and Work Institute has compiled a curriculum archive for confronting these topics in age-appropriate ways.

The materials, available for students from prekindergarten through 12th grade, were developed in partnership with the National Institute on Media and Family, the Anti-Defamation League, the Post September 11 Education Consortium, Educators for Social Responsibility and Reading Rainbow. The archive was created on the first anniversary of the attacks and has continued to be a valuable classroom resource. Click here for links to the materials.

What the Interstate Compact Says About: Eligibility

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children provides guidance to public schools regarding military students' eligibility for enrollment. To ensure that students are able to attend school with as little delay as possible, the Compact states that special power of attorney relative to guardianship of the military child is all that is needed to enroll the child and for all other activities at school that would require a parent's permission.

If a child has to move outside the district with a non-custodial parent or guardian, the school is not allowed to charge tuition for that child. In addition, the child should be allowed to continue attending his or her school if a move outside the current school's boundary is required.

Eligibility can also refer to a student's participation in extra-curricular activities. The Compact says that state and local education agencies should give military children an opportunity to participate in an extra-curricular program, such as sports or a band, regardless of whether they missed the deadline for try-outs or applications. The student, however, has to be otherwise qualified for the program that they want to take part in.

For more information on specific topics addressed by the Compact, visit Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission.

UPCOMING EVENTS

-Additional dates have been added for visits from the **Family Readiness Express**. (See our August issue for information on this remarkable vehicle.) Here is the current schedule:

Sept. 28-29: Jefferson Middle School in the Oceanside School District

Oct. 24-28: Temecula Valley Unified School District (specific locations to be announced)

Dec. 1-2: Chula Vista Elementary School District (specific locations to be announced)

-Free training opportunities for MSWs and school district personnel continue throughout the fall. (Check the August issue for more detailed information on these workshops.)

School Safety:

Oct. 3: Oceanside Unified School District Board Room

Oct. 24: Temecula Valley School District Conference Center

Nov. 7: San Diego Academic Center, Rancho Bernardo

Violence Threat Risk Assessment:

Nov. 4: Temecula Valley School District Conference Center

Dec. 5: San Diego Academic Center in Rancho Bernardo

Dec. 6: Oceanside Unified School District Board Room

To RSVP, email raastor@usc.edu. For questions, email Diana Pineda at dianapin@usc.edu.

News and Resources on Our Website

We have featured several important stories of interest to schools serving military students on our website in recent weeks. Check the site often to stay informed.

-This press release from Old Dominion University announces Darden College of Education's role in a $2.4 million Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) grant awarded to Newport News Public Schools (NNPS). The three-year grant, one of 26 awarded to military-connected local education agencies across the country, is designed to increase student achievement and ease the challenges that children of service members face due to transitions and deployment

-Preschool and elementary teachers will be interested in this new resource that can help young children deal with being separated from a parent. Quincy Companion Books, an imprint of Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing, released a new version of "Lily Hates Goodbyes." This full color storybook helps young military children grapple with deployment, suggests ways to help the child and absent parent feel connected across the miles, and reminds the child that a joyful reunion is ahead.

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