Military Child Education
National Charter School Conference

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1.2M military children of school age in the active duty military.

80,000 students rotate in and out of the Department of Defense schools both in the US and overseas (8% of total)

Most are in public schools.
IMPORANCE of EDUCATION

- Frequent DoD Surveys validate: Education of dependents is one of the top 3 Quality of Life issues for military families

- Military families understand the importance of quality education to the successful future of their children
NEGATIVE IMPACT OF HIGH MOBILITY

- Move every 2-3 years or 6-9 schools in a K-12 career
- Constantly losing credits, altering academic plans, modifying course series
- Repeating courses, gaps in knowledge, denial of services (especially gifted and special needs)
- Exit and entrance exams
- Kindergarten and First Grade entrance varies by state
- Military families lack patience with schools; there is no time to waste before they move again
- Frequent moves allow parents to recognize a responsive, caring, competent, high-achieving school
Essential for the military in all locations to attract the personnel needed to accomplish the mission.

Military families do not want to sacrifice the education of their children for the demands of their job.
Differences and inequities among public school systems; some school districts do not measure up

The cost of private schools is a tremendous financial burden, especially for enlisted personnel

Home Schooling dictates the loss of a spouse income

Desire to match the needs of their child to the type of learning experiences offered
Extended periods of deployment create additional challenges that can influence student achievement (RAND study: cumulative 19 months or more makes a significant impact on academic performance)

Children going through transition and deployment challenges are often more comfortable with their military peers

Parents believe charter schools allow them to have some “say” in what and how their children learn.
CHARTERS ON INSTALLATIONS

- **2002 Belle Chasse Academy**, Naval Air Station/Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, LA. (K-8).

- **2008 Manzanita Charter School** on Vandenberg Air Force Base, Lompoc, CA (Grades K-6), 75% from Lompoc and 25% military families.

- **2009 Sonoran Science Academy** at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, AZ (Grades 6-8. Will expand to grade 9).

- **2010 Sigsbee Charter School**, Naval Air Station Key West (K-6 and later through 8th grade).
UPCOMING CHARTERS


MILITARY CHARTERS: CHALLENGES

- 2/3\(^{rd}\)s to 3/4\(^{th}\)s of military families reside OFF installations

- Enrollment Challenges
  - 1/3 student turnover each year
  - Vacant seats filled by local students may not be available for newly arrived military students

- Base safety during times of heightened security
MILITARY CHARTERS: CHALLENGES

- Accurate and helpful information/data about schools and school districts is not always available to parents trying to make informed decisions.

- High state standards do not necessarily equate with schools teaching to standards or interpreting them uniformly.

- Uniqueness of the charter school may be the characteristic that makes it least portable.
MILITARY CHARTERS: CHALLENGES

- Standardized curriculum not yet available

- Charters tend to be elementary. Few options for high school – often the area of greatest need (approximately 23% are grades 9-12)

- Too limiting to think of charters only on the installations
PROMISING FUTURE TRENDS

- Charters that feature on-line/virtual education are attractive due to their portability and flexible pacing

- 21st century school concepts and designs support military child education (S.T.E.M.)

- House Appropriations Committee Report 2012 suggested Services set up a process for military families to establish charter schools at installations

- Off installation “military charter schools” replication
  
  Demonstrated success:
  - Chicago Military High Schools
  - Military Charter Academies
PROMISING FUTURE TRENDS

- Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children
- Troops to Teachers has contributed approximately 385 personnel to charter schools
- National Common Core Standards
- National Network of Independent Charter Schools for military children concept
- DoDEA Virtual School and LEA Partnership Program with DoDEA Diploma