

Military Child Education

National Charter School Conference



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MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION

- 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.



IMPORTANCE 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



MILITARY READINESS & RETENTION

- 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



MILITARY DEMAND FOR CHARTERS

- 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



MILITARY DEMAND FOR CHARTERS

- 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

- 2011 **Imagine Andrews Public Charter School**, Joint Base Andrews, Washington, D.C.-area (K-8) To open fall, 2011.
- 2011 **Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School**, Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas (Grades 5-8) To open fall, 2011.
- 2011 **New Orleans Military and Maritime Academy** on Federal City Military Complex, New Orleans. Expected to open off site in 2011 with 9th grade.



MILITARY CHARTERS: CHALLENGES

- 2/3^{rds} to 3/4^{ths} 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