



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY



CSP BACKGROUND REPORT

November 2011

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The Director of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) wishes to express thanks to all members of the DoDEA community who participated in the research activities undertaken to produce this Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Background Report. The experiences, knowledge, opinions, and ideas of the DoDEA community, are critical to the process of developing an enduring, essential and representative CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. Special thanks is also extended to the many community members who participated in one-on-one or group discussions, visited and responded on the CSP feedback website, and contributed to the CSP Steering Committee. Also to the headquarters staff who assisted in the logistics of data collection efforts and provided abundant source documentation.

Introduction

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) has begun the process of developing a new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. The first step in the development process was to conduct a wide-reaching and comprehensive environmental scan at the grassroots level to understand DoDEA stakeholders' concerns, opinions, and ideas about military-connected students' education. In order to gain the required understanding, various research efforts were performed including:

- Recent and historical review of expansive secondary documentation, such as educational review reports and customer satisfaction surveys;
- Stakeholder one-on-one and group discussions with numerous groups, such as teachers and military-connected non-profit associations;
- Social media to include the CSP feedback website for parents, students, and local community members;
- Review of other educational organizations' strategic plans; and
- Data and gap analysis

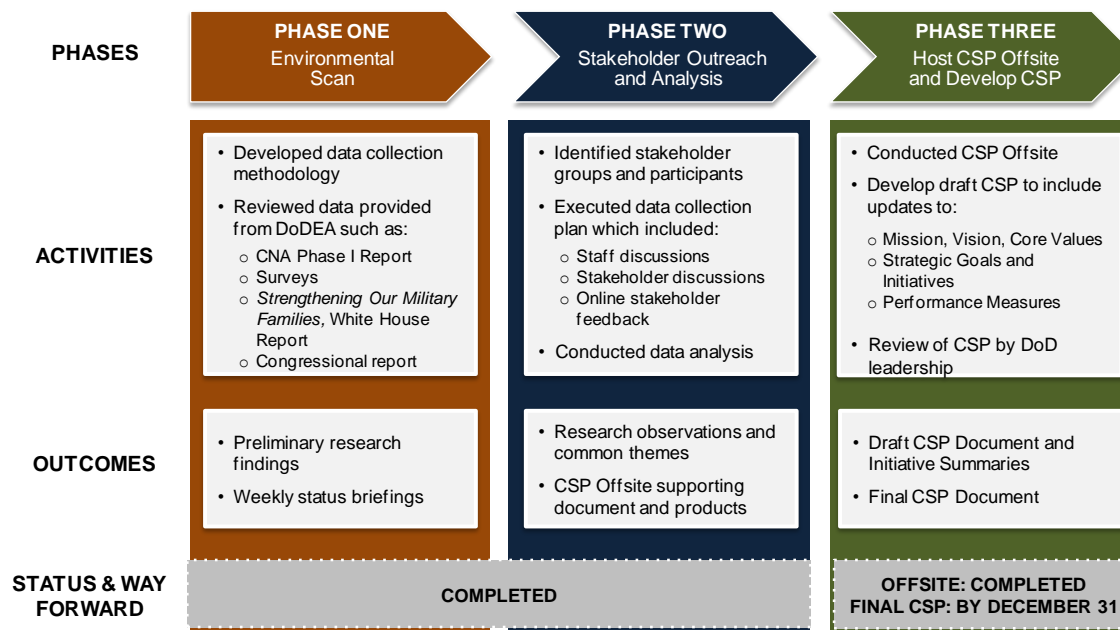
The CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17 is being deliberately and collectively developed to include the participation of all DoDEA stakeholders, unlike the CSP 2008 Alignment, which was largely driven by DoDEA headquarter and area leadership staff and the teachers union and association representatives.

The goal of these various research efforts is to ensure that the knowledge and understanding of the DoDEA community is used to inform the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. DoDEA is committed not only to providing a high-quality, student-centered education, but also to making a lasting and meaningful impact on military-connected families who sacrifice so much for our great Nation.

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process to refine the Department of Defense Education Activity's (DoDEA's) mission, vision, core values, goals, and performance measures was developed with the "community" as the foundation. Without the invaluable insight and ideas provided by DoDEA's community, a lasting, flexible, comprehensive CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17 would not be possible. In order to maximize this community input and grassroots level stakeholder participation, DoDEA is utilizing a deliberate three phrase approach [see Exhibit 1 below] to develop its CSP. In Phase One, an environmental scan was conducted to develop a primary data collection methodology, review expansive secondary documentation, and review previous DoDEA CSPs for historical context, as well as to gain a more thorough understanding of DoDEA's current challenges and opportunities. Stakeholder outreach was the cornerstone of Phase Two and, along with outcomes of Phase One, forms the basis for data analysis and the identification of common themes across the community stakeholder groups that are being used in development of the CSP. A stakeholder-representative CSP Steering Committee was selected to participate in the Phase Three offsite during which a draft mission, vision, core values, goals, and performance measures were developed after review and consideration of the common themes and results of background research. Further review and consideration of the draft work products will be extended to the DoDEA community and the CSP Steering Committee before final drafting of the CSP for submission into the Department of Defense (DoD) leadership structure.

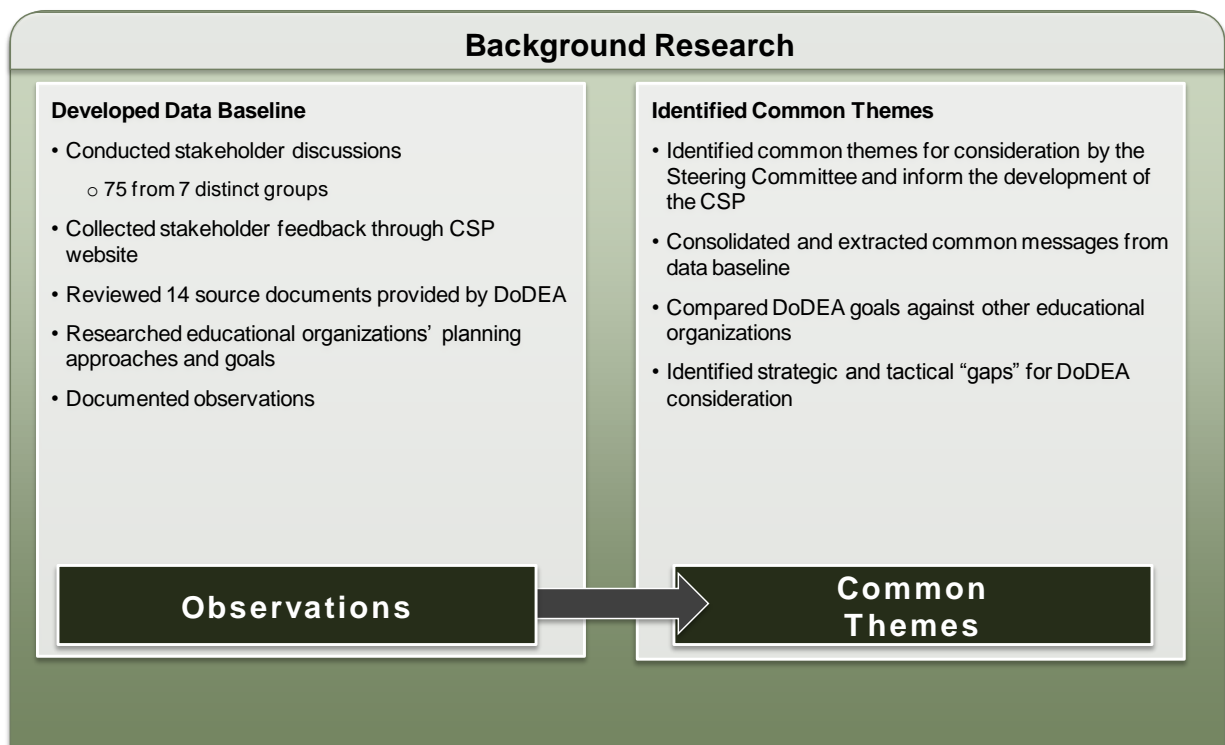
Exhibit 1: DoDEA CSP Approach



Methodology

An important part of the process of developing the refined CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17 was performing various research efforts to gather and review a wide range of data from a comprehensive list of stakeholder groups, with explicit outreach to teachers unions and associations whom collectively represent nearly 10,000 DoDEA employees. In an era of austerity and efficiencies, DoDEA leveraged existing means, such as pre-scheduled conferences to minimize data collection costs, and extensive data collection and analysis efforts that had already been undertaken, and outreached to the community by utilizing social media. The intent of these efforts was to equip the CSP Steering Committee and the DoDEA community with the environmental awareness and insights needed to envision strategies that will impact DoDEA's strategic direction. The purpose of this CSP Background Report is to present the summary findings of the research efforts conducted in Phase One: Environmental Scan and Phase Two: Stakeholder Outreach and Analysis, as previously mentioned in the Strategic Planning Process section of this report. The following research methodology was employed:

Exhibit 2: CSP Background Report Methodology



As depicted in Exhibit 2:

Developed Data Baseline

- Conducted seventy-five (75) stakeholder discussions with the DoDEA community to include:
 - Teachers (20)
 - Principals (20)
 - School administration (4)
 - DoDEA Area and District leaders (16)
 - Teachers union and association representatives (3)
 - Teachers unions and associations represent nearly 10,000 DoDEA employees
 - Military-connected non-profit associations (3)
 - DoDEA headquarters staff (9)
- Collected feedback through a CSP website targeting parents, students, and members of local communities. The intended target audiences were invited to contribute to the feedback website via emails and DoDEA's Facebook page. Furthermore, a web link to the CSP feedback website was highlighted on the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan web page. At the time of this report, 500 plus total responses have been provided in this effort. Previously, DoDEA received over 550 plus total responses on its Facilities for 21st Century Learning feedback website.
- Reviewed fourteen (14) source documents, including prior DoDEA strategic plans, research documents, customer satisfaction reports, and a host of external reports and publications addressing education for military-connected students. More specifically these documents included:
 - Previous CSP documentation:
 - CSP 2006-2011
 - CSP 2008 Alignment
 - CSP Mission Statement Evolution 1995-2006
 - DoDEA Data and Research Reports:
 - DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey School Year 2010-2011

- For the DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey 2010-2011, more than 19,000 sponsors and 27,000 4th-12th grade students responded to the survey
- Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts, 2011 Report to Congress (includes American Institutes for Research Report on Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts)
- DoDEA Grant Program
- External Data and Research Reports:
 - White House, Strengthening Our Military Families, January 2011
 - Government Accountability Office, Education of Military Dependent Students, March 2011
 - Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), Raising the Bar – Providing Military Children with a World-Class Education, Results Of A 90-Day Preliminary Assessment, January 2011. The CNA report was reviewed for environmental awareness of strategies that could affect DoDEA’s strategic direction; however, this report is not available for public release.
 - CNA, Raising the Bar – Providing Military Children with a World-Class Education, Defining a World-Class Education For Military Dependents, July 2011. The CNA report was reviewed for environmental awareness of strategies that could affect DoDEA’s strategic direction; however, this report is not available for public release.
 - Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Defense and Department Of Education, June 2008
 - Jacobs Engineering Group, Facilities for 21st Century Learning, April 2011
 - American Institutes for Research, Military Connection and Student Achievement, June 2011
 - The McKenzie Group, Inc., Community Strategic Planning Research Report, August 1995

- Nine (9) strategic plans from other educational organizations were researched to gain an understanding of the strategies and supporting strategic goals they are undertaking to improve educational outcomes. Strategic plans were selected based on multiple reasons such as similar characteristics to DoDEA, recognized and high performing school districts, and/or the availability of plans and processes. More specifically, these educational organizations included:
 - Houston, Texas Independent School District
 - Montgomery County, Maryland Public Schools
 - Henrico County, Virginia Public Schools
 - Mesa, Arizona Public Schools
 - Kennebunkport, Maine Regional School Unit 21
 - U.S. Department of Education
 - Brightstart: The Early Childhood Comprehensive System for Louisiana
 - Union County, New Jersey Public Schools
 - Boston, Massachusetts Public Schools

“The life experiences that our children are getting will benefit them in many ways.”
– Parent

Identified Common Themes

From these collective research efforts, a series of observations or recurring messages, common themes, and strategic and tactical gaps began to emerge. These observations and common themes are not intended to be exhaustive as they only represent a review of data at one point in time; however, they were used as starting discussion points for the CSP Steering Committee offsite to begin to refine the DoDEA strategic direction for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17.

Summary of Findings

This summary of findings from the CSP background research efforts is divided into four key components:

1. **Common themes** identified during the background research.
2. **Key stakeholder messages** from parents, students, teachers, principals, members of local communities, teachers union and association representatives, and military-connected non-profit associations.
3. **Comparison of DoDEA goals** relative to **goals from other educational organizations**.
4. **Gap analysis** between findings from background research and strategic and tactical areas being address by other educational organizations.

Common Themes

The following common themes began to emerge when analyzing stakeholder responses during one-on-one and group discussions and the 14 source documents:

1. The educational experience of military-connected students is unique and consideration should be given to their particular academic, social, and emotional needs.
2. Attention to the individual learners should be increased, with a focus on their needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles.
3. Parents should be equipped to more effectively facilitate military-connected student transition and acclimation.
4. A framework should be created, with supporting processes and tools, to enable a seamless transition for military-connected students.
5. A process and mechanism is needed to enable DoDEA to maintain a holistic view of the military-connected student throughout the educational lifecycle.
6. There is a need for adoption of Common Core State Standards to address transition and deployment issues.
7. DoDEA requires a comprehensive definition of what a high quality education means, and student learning objectives and educator performance measures should be developed in support of that definition.
8. There is a need for alignment between Common Core State Standards and how DoDEA chooses to define core curriculum and testing methodologies.

9. It should be determined which data elements to collect to enable informed decision-making about educational performance.
10. Virtual and computer-based learning platforms can provide an instructional mechanism to meet common and unique student needs.
11. Curriculum and instruction should be advanced to address Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), advanced placement courses, foreign languages, fine arts, and special education.
12. A staff development and continuous learning approach should be created, which equips DoDEA educators to provide a high-quality educational experience.
13. The staffing approach should be revisited to ensure that DoDEA is attracting, selecting, developing, evaluating and retaining the very best educators and administrators.
14. A data strategy that provides the information required to enable educators and administrators to make informed decisions should be developed and implemented.
15. An improved balance between centralized and local Information Technology (IT) support is needed for effective IT utilization.
16. Effective technology use in the classroom will require the implementation of more rigorous IT management practices.
17. DoDEA needs to find the right balance between centralized and decentralized planning, control and decision-making.
18. Clear and consistent communications across DoDEA, with parents and the community, are needed.

“...Happy to see that our school systems are collaborating with the DoDEA efforts to make schools more effective...”

– Community Member

Key Stakeholder Messages

These common messages were identified during stakeholder discussions and review of data from the CSP feedback website. Direct quotes represent the opinions offered as part of the CSP feedback website. All other opinions are a representative sample of repetitive feedback provided by a specific stakeholder group.

Parents

Common messages of parental opinion are drawn exclusively from the open forum web collection vehicle. The volume of response was high with over 376 responses. A recognizable pattern of issues parents are urging DoDEA to address:

- Quality of teachers, administrators, counselors and principals. Whether the opinion of the teaching and administrative professional is positive or negative, most parents taking part in the online survey had an opinion. Strong feelings related to the certifying, monitoring and continuous improvement of tenured teaching professionals was by far the most frequent parental opinion expressed about DoDEA.
 - “Something must be done to make sure that teachers are being held accountable for the students.”
 - “Overall I am very impressed with the caring and effort of most Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) educators.”
 - “I’d like to see Goal 3¹ to be implemented by having ‘motivated teachers’ by making sure they are capable of teaching the subject matter.”
- Quality, frequency, and delivery method of communications.
 - “Join the 21st century please. Where are the blogging, podcasting, vodcasting, computer-based learning etc.?”
 - “Communication between school and home is consistent and sincere.”
 - “Would like more communication with the teachers but not sure this is realistic. Would not want to take time away from the students.”
- School-level responsibility for addressing local issues such as discipline, transition and deployment, quality of facilities, extra-curricular offerings, and curriculum consistency when compared to other schools. Most parents don’t appear to interact with DoDEA at a level higher than the individual school(s) their children attend.
 - “You want us to be involved, but are not allowed to make changes at the local level.”
 - “The transition into this school was rough and each child felt they were the only ones who did not know the routine or where to go.”
 - “Allow funding to flow all the way down to the smallest schools. If I’m not mistaken the larger DOD schools get nearly all and the smaller get the morsels.”

“...Pleased that we now have so many choices through online learning...it certainly helps supplement, especially in a community where children transition...”
– Parent

¹ DoDEA 2006-2011 Community Strategic Plan

- Differentiated education. There was a preponderance of feedback related to defining the needs of the individual student across the entire spectrum of ability, from those in need of special education services to those seeking advanced opportunity, including localized foreign language and cultural immersion.
 - “I think some of the children could definitely be challenged more.”
 - “The programs are very lacking that encourage the youth that want to do technical skills.”
 - “I am so tired of the curriculum catering only to students who don’t do well!”
 - “I am pleased we now have so many choices through online learning.”

Students

Conversely, less than 20 students provided feedback via the CSP feedback website. Consistent messages focused on technology access, communication, transition, and deployment. The importance of the counselor and teacher are clear.

- “I really like the deployment clubs and think every school should have them. They’ve helped me a lot.”
- “I like how the school counselor helps when one of your parents are deployed. She tells you what to do when you’re getting teased or bullied.”
- “My teachers don’t seem to care if I’m passing my class or miss my assignments.”
- “I want to do good in school and I just want to be in a school that wants to help people like me.”
- “We need more computers that are not OLD as the ones we use now. Can we get them?”
- “We use smart boards and laptops, but almost one quarter of these items are defective.”

Teachers

The opinions of teachers were collected through two primary methods: one-on-one discussions and group discussions, as well as discussions with union and association leaders representing nearly 10,000 total DoDEA staff. The CSP feedback website was not intended for teacher feedback; however, a small number of teachers, 12, contributed by self-identifying as a part of the community. There was an overall need for a communication strategy with stakeholders displaying varying levels of mistrust of messages and support. One teacher stated, “Without a

trust factor among administration and teachers, the morale will continue to drop lower than it already is at our schools!”

- Professional development. It was noted there is a need to coordinate a systematic, consistent training process, and allow the time to perform. There is very little recognition of, or reward for, continuous improvement by teaching professionals.
 - “I earned my National Board Certification last year and have not heard anything regarding incentives or rewards. It would be great to see this actually put into action...”
 - “I’d like to see increased training for staff on the CSP including instruction on how to link the goals to our schools and classroom goals.”
- Technology. Teachers by and large felt a frustration with the fielding of technology into the classroom. Inconsistent training in new technologies provided also often rendered them useless. Most teachers build their own “work around.”
- A focus on test scores, less on teaching. Teachers lamented the mandated focus on bringing up classroom test scores, to the detriment of actual one-on-one teaching opportunities.
 - “There is far too much ‘bureaucratic red tape’ involved now in our schools.....there are far too many assessments required to give the students. Sadly, it is NOT about the children anymore!!”
 - “Emphasis on scoring 65% on a standardized test simply makes the school system look silly.”
 - “Producing students with excellent work habits would certainly help our country in my opinion.”

Principals

The opinions of principals were collected during one-on-one discussions, 20 in total. Overall, principals would prefer more autonomy and decision-making responsibility.

- Transition. Suggestions for improvement to assist students who transition between schools included: consistency in curriculum; adoption of the Common Core State Standards and consistencies in scope and sequence; educating parents on transition; consistency of transition process; and development of a transcript program with the National Education Program.

- **Technology.** Principals noted that there are resounding problems with the fielding and delivery of technology solutions in the classroom, to include a lack of acceptable levels of available bandwidth, a huge inequity in technology availability across the organization, and a consistent feeling of disappointment with technology training. Yet, technology is universally seen as an imperative for educating in the 21st century.
- **Curriculum.** Several participants noted DoDEA needs to stay in-sync with state schools through the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Since DoDEA is a global organization, a focus on foreign language programs was suggested. Participants also noted there is a lack of programs for non-college bound students. It was suggested that there should be a revamp of the Special Education Program.
- **Talent Management.** Principals consistently lamented the lack of control they feel when addressing under-performing staff at their schools, citing little authority to motivate, discipline, or even offer feedback to teaching professionals under the current appraisal system.

Community members

Derived from 120 responses on the CSP feedback website, the input examined comes from a wide array of contributors since the category choice was “self-select.” A good number of the comments come from those self-identifying as teachers. Those comments were captured and considered above in the Teacher section on Page 13-14 of this document. Below are responses from community members other than those who self-identified as teachers.

“...Wonderful teachers that share the passion to teach our children.”

– Parent

- **Community involvement.** There was a consistent desire among participants to be part of the solution to improve the school processes, and make recommendations on how to better integrate the school within the community.
 - “We are in the trenches each and every day, and the DSO, DoDEA and this ‘external group’ are not.”
 - “...we would like to organize some exchanges in order to share our culture.”
 - “I feel that DoDDS is isolated in the communities we’ve lived in. I’d like to see more willingness, in a systematic way, for DoDDS to embrace the community and partner with various organizations (such as MWR) in order to support our military families and children.”
- **Transition and deployment.**

- “When students are transferring within DoDEA, whether it’s Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) or DoDDS, it would be helpful for there to be some standard set of assessments that follow each child so the gaining school does not have to start at ground floor...”
- “The on-post schools in the United States are critical....These post schools allow deployed parents peace of mind during our time of war.”
- “The schools can have a welcome package that will support the transition to the new school.”
- “A national curriculum would help immensely with students who move in and out of school districts.”
- Curriculum and instruction consistency. There was universal concern about inconsistencies and inadequacies of the curriculum and its delivery.
 - “Instruction should be aligned throughout the district. Assessments should also therefore follow and be given at every school to every class.”
 - “It is utterly shocking that not all subject areas in DoDEA have defined curriculum, scope and sequence, and curriculum maps.”
 - “I continue to be amazed that a school system as prominent as DoDEA does not have a ‘curriculum’ for its high school courses.”
 - “Professional development of our teachers in their subject is nonexistent.”
 - “Other assessments besides TerraNova should be consistent between the DoDEA schools.”
 - “21st century skills should be a focus for DoDEA students.”
- Accountability. Responders expressed desire for some level of localized accountability for resource allocation, educational prioritization, and especially the services provided to the student population.
 - “How is mid-management being held accountable for DoDEA’s mission?”
 - “There is too much time wasted on phony school improvement initiatives (i.e. Continuous School Improvement [CSI]). Instead of a broad shallow view of ‘school improvement’ we focus on improving teachers. NONE of the CSI plans in any school make teachers better teachers.”
 - “Teachers should be allowed to have on-site management and not mandates from the top down.”

- “We need to hold parents, teachers, the school and the community accountable for getting students to class every day.”

Teachers union and association representatives

To facilitate the discussion process, the CSP development team created a set of discussion questions for this specific stakeholder group. The following is a synopsis of the discussions, which were organized around four subject areas.

- **Mission and CSP.** It was noted that the mission statement should put a greater emphasis on providing “opportunities” to students, and not just focus on education. Success needs to be more than student achievement, and should include areas such as the arts, humanities and encouraging students to become caring citizens. In addition, there needs to be a better definition of success and how it is measured. It was stated that the current mission statement is designed for the generic student, and is not individualized for DoDEA’s students.
- **Strategic Direction.** Professional development needs to be a continuous activity, and the current “one size fits all” approach does not deliver meaningful training opportunities. It was also stated that training should be provided by professionals and not just via “train the trainer” or virtually. For the development of the next CSP it was noted that DoDEA should localize decision-making wherever possible, as all districts are not the same and there is a need for localized strategies and implementation plans. Other areas of focus for the strategic direction of the CSP included a focus on the well-rounded student (not just a focus on STEM), a focus on curriculum implementation, and better prioritization at the headquarters level.
- **Message and Communications.** Stakeholders reported that there are many initiatives within DoDEA that can be better controlled and coordinated, because the high number of initiatives limit communication bandwidth. There is a need to develop a communication strategy that ensures message consistency and understanding and is effectively disseminated from headquarters to areas, districts, and schools, and vice-versa. In addition, it was noted there needs to be a better process for explaining curriculum, acquisition, and implementation. According to interviewees, the communication policy

“As an elementary teacher working in...Public Schools, I would like to say that children from the military and military related background have proven to be some of my most respectful, responsible and academically advanced students.”

– Teacher of military-connected student

needs to include accountability controls. It was also recommended that teachers be better involved in the pre-decision making process.

- **Data Collection Strategy.** Stakeholders noted a desire for better data collection strategies for students, curriculum, and educators. There is a need to develop a plan for the type of data that DoDEA collects, and the reason for collecting certain data points. In regard to students, a data collection strategy for non-college bounds students is needed. In addition, students are currently assessed on academics; however, there is a need to collect other data as well. It was stated that TerraNova is not useful to teachers in the classroom and there is a need for a data collection strategy to evaluate the curriculum. Also teachers should not be creating assessment tests, and assessment strategies should be handled by an outside entity. Lastly, it was noted the CSI needs to be reassessed to better represent goals.

Military-connected non-profit associations

Discussions were held to understand the position and opinion of military-connected non-profit organizations, such as the National Military Family Association (NMFA), the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), and the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA). The findings of the discussions were organized around six areas.

- **Mission and CSP.** DoDEA could improve its mission statement to include areas such as grants and partnerships. In regard to the CSP, it was stated that DoDEA could put forth a greater effort in getting public schools to work with them on reporting, as the current Impact Aid program has minimal leverage on reporting requirements.
- **Strategic Direction.** Math should be a top priority for DoDEA. Assessments were also a major topic for discussion. It was stated that the TerraNova test collects limited data, and there is a need for a more balanced assessment module, such as criterion-referenced assessments. Other areas for the strategic direction of DoDEA include facility maintenance and a better support system for children with special needs.
- **Communication and Operation Strategies.** DoDEA should promote the quality education students are receiving and highlight positive messages. It was reported that DoDEA and their partners should be more systematic about communications. Both DoDEA and their partners can positively promote successful programs, such as Student 2 Student (S2S).
- **Data Collection Strategies.** It was stated that

“The deployment club program...helped me a lot when my dad was deployed...”

– Student

DoDEA must collect data on military-connected students because there is currently no way to identify where these children are located. Since there is no criterion-referenced test for Goal 1² (student achievement) of the CSP, DoDEA is unable to compare data points. It was stated that the DoDEA K-3 assessment for reading is a great step toward criterion testing and data collection. There is also a need for data around student demographics to include economics, gender, race, special education needs, and gifted programs.

- Student Population and Transition. In order to better track military-connected students, it was suggested that a reporting requirement on school enrollment forms be implemented.
- Curriculum. Since there is no criterion-referenced test for Goal 1³ (student achievement) of the CSP, DoDEA is unable to compare data points. It was recommended that DoDEA adopt the Common Core State Standards. It was also stated that the DoDEA K-3 assessment for reading is a great step toward criterion testing.

Comparison of DoDEA and Other Educational Organizations' Strategic Goals

As previously mentioned, nine strategic plans from other educational organizations were researched to gain knowledge of other strategic goals and efforts. Exhibit 3 provides a comparison of DoDEA's 4 goals from the 2006-2011 CSP to these other educational organizations' goals. As Exhibit 3 shows, DoDEA shares many of the same strategic goals. There were a total of 51 goals identified, and out of these, only 13 goals from the other educational organizations do not share similar characteristics with DoDEA. These 13 goals with differing characteristics are shown in white in Exhibit 3 on the next page:

² DoDEA 2006-2011 Community Strategic Plan

³ DoDEA 2006-2011 Community Strategic Plan

Exhibit 3: CSP Background Report Methodology

LEGEND: Student Achievement Management / Environment Workforce Partnerships / Communication

EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION	GOALS								
DoDEA 2006-2011	All students will meet or exceed challenging standards in academic content so they are prepared for continuous learning	DoDEA will use performance driven management systems that operate in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner; place resource allocation and decision making at the lowest operational level; and facilitate a safe environment conducive to optimum student achievement	The DoDEA workforce will be motivated, diverse, and committed to continuous professional growth and development resulting in exemplary performance and optimum student achievement	Every level of DoDEA will develop, promote, and maintain partnerships and communications to enhance student development					
Houston, Texas Independent School District	Increase Student Achievement	Improve Human Capital	Provide a Safe Environment	Increase Management Effectiveness and Efficiency	Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools	Create a Positive District Culture			
Montgomery County, Maryland Public Schools	Ensure success for every student	Provide an effective instructional program	Strengthen productive partnerships for education	Create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization	Provide high-quality business services that are essential to the educational success of students				
Henrico County, Virginia Public Schools	All students will graduate upon completion of the Henrico County Public School curriculum that exceeds state and national standards	All students will achieve at the highest possible level of the Henrico County Public School's curriculum	All students will learn in an environment that efficiently and effectively supports the instructional program	All students will develop life skills for individual success and total well-being	All students will graduate prepared to be self-sustaining and competitive as they pursue their personal aspirations	All students will practice civic responsibility and good stewardship of resources in their communities	All students will become responsible and effective users of technology		
Mesa, Arizona Public Schools	Learning and achievement	Relevant and high-quality comprehensive curriculum	Highly qualified and highly effective personnel	Expect all stakeholders to take personal responsibility for student learning	Safe, healthy and nurturing learning environments	Students, staff, parents and community working together, etc.	Optimal and Equitable Utilization of Resources		
Kennebunkport, Maine Regional School Unit 21	All students will graduate from our schools with a world class education prepared to succeed in college, in work, and as involved, responsible citizens	Teaching and learning	High performing administration, faculty, and staff	Financial planning and oversight	Facilities planning and management	Monitoring, updates, and reporting process			
Department of Education	Improve student achievement, with a focus on bringing all students to grade level in reading and mathematics by 2014	Increase the academic achievement of all high school students	Ensure the accessibility, affordability, and accountability of higher education, and better prepare students and adults for employment and future learning						
Brightstart Early Childhood System	Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes	Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development	Early Care and Education	Parent Education	Family Support				
Union County, New Jersey Public Schools	UCPS will prepare students for the 21st Century	UCPS will meet and/or exceed state and federal standards through continuous improvement and student achievement	UCPS will meet the diverse needs of all students	UCPS will hire and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff, etc.	UCPS learning environments will be safe, inviting, and respectful	UCPS will equitably allocate and align budgeted resources to meet identified needs for systems.	UCPS systems will support the effective and efficient operations of the district and schools	UCPS will promote and encourage community/parent involvement and input	UCPS will promote and encourage business support of and involvement of schools
Boston, MA Public Schools	Ensure all students achieve MCAS proficiency	Close access and achievement gaps	Graduate all students from high school prepared for college completion and career success						

Gap Analysis

As previously noted, the background research which examined only one point in time is not intended to and does not provide a complete picture of the strategic and tactical topics that DoDEA should consider for inclusion in its CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. Below is a list of other strategic and tactical topics for consideration and discussion by the DoDEA community, which may supplement some of common themes and common stakeholder messages noted above:

- Assess, and if necessary adjust, proficiency standards to refine performance indicators for students, teachers, and schools.
- Examine current communication strategies and refine or develop a strategy around timely, open communication both to internal (student, parent, teacher, counselor, school, district, area, headquarters and vice versa) and external (DoDEA to teachers union and association representatives, local communities, military community, and military-connected non-profit associations and vice versa).
- Create an Individual Student Profile to develop and track student performance not only within the DoDEA school system, but also within school systems outside of DoDEA when students are transitioning.
- At the area and district level, develop host nation cultural materials to help prepare families and students for acclimation.
- Conduct a comprehensive global best practices study of other educational organizations and determine which systems, models, policies, and/or processes may be applicable to DoDEA and conduct a feasibility study for possible implementation.
- Determine what “high quality, student-centered” and “school excellence” mean to DoDEA.
- Define what “21st century” skills, students, etc mean to DoDEA.

Appendix A: Stakeholder Discussions

Discussions with DoDEA Teachers, Principals, and Administrators

SYNOPSIS

For the development of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, input from a wide-range of stakeholders is critical to ensure the new CSP is informed and represents the beliefs of the DoDEA community. To assist in this effort, the Armed Forces Service Corporation (AFSC) conducted interviews with DoDEA teachers, principals, and administrators. AFSC was able to meet with these stakeholders face-to-face at the Long Beach Center for School Leadership conference. Participants attended the conference voluntarily and took part in interviews so that they could provide their thoughts and ideas on the strategic mapping process for the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. There were a total of 44 discussions conducted at the Long Beach conference; participants included 20 teachers, 20 principals, and 4 administrators. All discussions were conducted in anonymity, although respondents were tracked for demographic data to establish any trending data.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

To facilitate the interview process AFSC developed a set of discussion questions for each stakeholder group represented at the conference. Questions were grouped into the following subject areas:

1. Mission and CSP
2. Technology
3. Human Capital
4. Student Transition
5. Message and Communications
6. Operations
7. Curriculum

The findings of the discussions are organized around the six specific areas listed above. The first part of the following section summarizes the executive summary of all findings, and is followed by findings for each of the seven subject areas.

Executive Summary

The majority of respondents were supportive of the CSP, the process to develop it, and the opportunity to contribute to its successful completion. General support exists for the current

mission statement and CSP, so long as the details are public, definable, and lead to executable actions that can be visualized. Overall, district and school level staff crave more autonomy and decision-making responsibility and would covet a strategy that drives decision-making down. Additionally, there was an overall multi-level need for a communication strategy with stakeholders displaying varying levels of mistrust of messages and support in all communication directions.

Mission and CSP

It was noted that the education DoDEA offers is “baseline” and there needs to be an emphasis on advanced courses to be “exemplary.” Additionally, DoDEA is not meeting the need for continuous school improvement, and the CSP should drive regular re-examination of the organization’s direction across the next five years. The current mission statement includes military students, but there are also civilian students who should be addressed as well. Participants noted that while supporting the military in deployments, moves, and restrictive processes there tends to be far too many excuses for lack of diligence in education including absences, vacations, leave, military schedules.

Technology

Overall stakeholders noted that there are resounding problems with bandwidth as a major component of all technology problems. In addition, it was noted that there is a huge inequity in technology across the organization, and that consistency is needed. During the discussion process it was observed that there is a consistent feeling of disappointment with technology training. Furthermore, the DoDEA student information system (ASPEN) requirements are too labor-intensive to keep up with. Interview subjects suggested that DoDEA localize IT support functions and help desk support as an improvement to the current technology system. Participants also noted that DoDEA needs a strategy for continuous improvement that could be structured as a “plan for instruction, support with technology.” The only subject area that was contradictory was social media, with participants providing such an array of thoughts and ideas that our findings are inconclusive on the topic.

Human Capital

There were several topics in this subject area that centered on professional development and educator performance elements. Participants noted that the educator performance elements are “antiquated.” Currently educator performance is either noted as satisfactory or unsatisfactory; participants also noted that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach. In addition, it was noted there is too much emphasis on test scores in appraising talent. Regarding professional development, it was noted there is a need to coordinate a systematic, consistent training process, and allow the

time to perform it. According to participants, stakeholders in the organization need training in research-based instructional practice to stay current. Additionally, it was stated that there is a need for technology for training aids for virtual assessments.

Student Transition

This subject area explores the strategies that are currently used, or strategies stakeholders would like to see implemented when working with students who transition as part of a military-related move. Strategies that are currently in place and that participants noted as successful for transitions include: the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Student 2 Student (S2S) program; the Virtual School; and DoDEA counselors. Suggestions for improvement to assist students who transition include: consistency in curriculum; adoption of the Common Core Standards; educating parents on transition; consistency for transition process; and development of a transcript program with the National Education Program.

Message and Communications

This subject area discusses how administrators, principals, and teachers communicate with each other as well as with internal and external stakeholders. Overall the participants felt there was a clear lack of flexibility allowed within the organization. Participants thought there was a failure in communication between DoDEA headquarters, areas, districts, and schools. Suggestions for improving communication within DoDEA included making messaging “all about the children,” finding a better communication strategy to ease deployments, creating a social media presence, leveraging available military resources such as Fleet and Family and MCEC, and making communications open and honest.

Operations

This subject area focused on a variety of topics. There were two common themes within the operations subject area, and several other issues that were mentioned for improvement. Common themes included localized decision-making and resource distribution. It was noted that DoDEA should develop localized leadership with localized decisions and responsibility; it is better to fix problems locally without involving senior leadership remotely. It was also noted that DoDEA should manage the process of resource distribution with greater care, and the approval and purchasing process should be streamlined. Other suggestions for improvement include utilization of good measurable data, a consistent operating message, using the CSP to direct school improvement, and more transparency in funding.

Curriculum

While conducting interviews in Long Beach the subject area of curriculum was frequently mentioned, and areas that were mentioned were broad in scope. Several participants noted that DoDEA needs to stay in-synch with state schools, and it was additionally suggested that DoDEA adopt the Common Core Standards. Since DoDEA is a global organization it was suggested that they need to stay up-to-date with language programs so that they can provide a dynamic global education. Participants also noted there is a lack of programs for non-college bound students and suggested that the Special Education Program be revamped. Furthermore, participants stated there needs to be structured communication and direction between curriculum specialists and teachers.

Discussions with Teachers Union and Association Representatives

SYNOPSIS

For the development of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, input from a wide-range of stakeholders is critical to ensure that the new CSP is informed and represents the beliefs of the DoDEA community. To assist in this effort, the Armed Forces Service Corporation (AFSC) conducted interviews with DoDEA teachers union and association presidents. AFSC conducted interviews in person and via telephone. The teachers union and association presidents voluntarily took part in interviews so that they could provide their thoughts and ideas on the strategic mapping process for the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

To facilitate the interview process, AFSC developed a set of discussion questions for this specific stakeholder group. Questions were grouped into the following subject areas:

1. Mission and CSP
2. Strategic Direction
3. Message and Communications
4. Data Collection Strategy

The findings of the discussions are organized around the four specific areas listed above.

Mission and CSP

It was noted that the mission statement should put a greater emphasis on providing “opportunities” to students, and not just focus on education. Success needs to be more than student achievement, and should include areas such as the arts, humanities and promoting students to become caring citizens. In addition, there needs to be a better definition of success and how it is measured. It was also stated that the current mission statement is designed for the generic student, and is not individualized for DoDEA’s students. Teachers union presidents commented that the mission and the CSP need to address the needs of the local community.

Strategic Direction

Overall stakeholders noted that there are resounding problems with professional development and training opportunities. Additionally professional development needs to be a continuous activity, and the current “one size fits all” approach does not deliver meaningful training opportunities. It was also stated that training should be provided by professionals and not just

via “train the trainer” or virtually. In order to meet the goal of highest student achievement, DoDEA needs to train the professionals. For the development of the next CSP it was noted that DoDEA should localize decision making wherever possible, as all districts are not the same and there is need for localized strategies and implementation plans. Also, since all districts are not the same it was stated that technology should not be overextended since it doesn’t work in every location. Other areas of focus for the strategic direction of the CSP included a focus on a well-rounded student (not just a focus on STEM), a focus on curriculum implementation, and better prioritization at the headquarters level.

Message and Communications

Stakeholders reported that DoDEA needs to better control and coordinate the number of initiatives it is responsible for, because they limit the communication bandwidth. There is a need to develop a communication strategy that ensures message consistency and understanding and is effectively disseminated from headquarters to areas, districts, schools, and vice-versa. In addition, there needs to be a better process for explaining curriculum, acquisition, and implementation. According to interviewees, the communication policy needs to include accountability controls. It was also recommended that teachers be more involved in the pre-decision making process.

Data Collection Strategy

Stakeholders noted a desire for better data collection strategies for students, curriculum, and educators. There is a need to develop a plan for the type of data that DoDEA collects, and the reason for collecting certain data points. In regard to students, there is a need for a data collection strategy for non-college bounds students. In addition, students are currently assessed on academics; however, there is a need to collect other data as well. It was stated that TerraNova is not useful to teachers in the classroom and there is a need for data collection strategy to evaluate the curriculum. Furthermore, teachers should not be creating assessment tests, and assessment strategies should be handled by an outside entity. Lastly, it was noted that the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) needs to be reassessed to better represent goals.

Discussions with Military-Connected Non-Profit Associations

SYNOPSIS

For the development of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, input from a wide-range of stakeholders is critical to ensure that the new CSP is informed and represents the beliefs of the DoDEA community. To assist in this effort, the Armed Forces Service Corporation (AFSC) conducted interviews with the National Military Family Association (NMFA) and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). AFSC conducted these interviews over the phone. Participants voluntarily offered to take part in interviews so they could provide their thoughts and ideas on the strategic mapping process for the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

To facilitate the interview process, AFSC developed a set of discussion questions for this specific stakeholder group. Questions were grouped into the following subject areas:

1. Mission and CSP
2. Strategic Direction
3. Communications and Operational Strategies
4. Data Collection Strategies
5. Student Population and Student Transition
6. Curriculum

The findings of the discussions are organized around the six specific areas listed above.

Mission and CSP

Participants noted that DoDEA could improve their mission statement to include areas such as grants and partnerships. In regard to the CSP it was stated that that DoDEA could put forth a greater effort in getting public schools to work with them on reporting, as the current Impact Aid program has minimal leverage on reporting requirements.

Strategic Direction

According to interviewees, math should be a top priority for DoDEA. Assessments were also a major topic for discussion. It was stated that the TerraNova test has limitations on what data is collected, and there is a need for a more balanced assessment module. DoDEA should take a hard look at their assessment process. Additionally, they need criterion referenced assessments. Other areas for the strategic direction of DoDEA include maintaining work on facilities in the

new CSP, changing to the attendance policy, having a better support system for children with special needs, and elevating Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to centers of excellence.

Communication and Operation Strategies

According to interviewees, DoDEA should promote the quality education their students are receiving and highlight positive messages. It was reported that DoDEA and their partners should be more systematic about communications. Both organizations can positively promote successful programs, such as Student 2 Student (S2S).

Data Collection Strategies

Participants stated that DoDEA must collect data on military-connected children, because currently there is no way to identify where these children are located. Since there is no criterion referenced test for Goal 1 of the new CSP, DoDEA is unable to compare data points. It was stated that the DoDEA K-3 assessment for reading is a great step toward criterion testing and data collection. There is also a need for data around demographics to include economics, gender, race, special education needs, gifted programs, etc.

Student Population and Transition

In order to better track military-connected children it was suggested that a reporting requirement on school enrollment forms be implemented. This is because the Interstate Compact does not have a mechanism for states to report on military-connected children. Interviews stated that great programs currently exist such as S2S and MISA's Tutoring Program, so there is no need for DoDEA to replicate these programs.

Curriculum

Since there is no criterion referenced test for Goal 1 of the 2012-13 through 2016-17 CSP, DoDEA is unable to compare data points. It was recommended that DoDEA adopt the Common Core Standards. It was also stated that the DoDEA K-3 assessment for reading is a great step toward criterion testing.

Discussions with DoDEA Area Directors and District Superintendents

SYNOPSIS

For the development of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, input from a wide-range of stakeholders is critical to ensure that the new CSP is informed and represents the beliefs of the DoDEA community. To assist in this effort, the Armed Forces Service Corporation (AFSC) conducted interviews with regional leadership of the DoDEA organization, to include area directors, district superintendents, and Curriculum Information Administrators (CIAs). AFSC was able to meet with these stakeholders face-to-face in conjunction with the DoDEA Leadership Meeting held at the DoDEA Headquarters in Arlington, VA. Participants voluntarily offered to take part in interviews so they could provide their thoughts and ideas on the strategic mapping process for the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. There were a total of 16 discussions conducted over the week of 25-28 July 2011. All discussions were conducted in anonymity, although respondents were tracked for demographic data to establish any trending data.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

To facilitate the interview process, AFSC developed a set of discussion questions for each stakeholder group represented at the conference. Questions were grouped into the following subject areas:

1. Mission and CSP
2. Technology
3. Human Capital
4. Student Transition
5. Message and Communications
6. Operations
7. Curriculum

The findings of the discussions are organized around the seven specific areas listed above. The first part of the following section summarizes the executive summary of all findings followed by findings for each of the seven subject areas.

Executive Summary

A large number of respondents have been contributors at some level in previous CSP development efforts, and have used the document tool as a management tool in area- or district-level operational review. All were supportive of the CSP, the process used to develop it, and the opportunity to contribute to its successful completion. Some overarching and common themes emerged among the majority of the interviews including:

1. There is a clear and consistent understanding of the service to our students and their preparation for life after DoDEA as the lowest common denominator of our goals.
2. Participants held strong opinions that certain aspects of DoDEA operations should be pushed down to the localized decision-making level, but they demanded responsibility and accountability for all localized actions.
3. Revising the personnel system is a high priority among district superintendents, as most feel the process is slow and antiquated.
4. Areas consistently suggested for improvement were: the transfer program; personal development; labor relational authority; the timing of hiring opportunity windows; and the disparity in when areas can hire.

Mission and CSP

Among interview subjects, in general, the CSP process is well-respected, valuable, and an integral part of setting expectations for student achievement, although the process should be revisited and revised on a regular basis. Additionally, they suggested there must be greater scrutiny around who our global population is, and how we will educate that population while preparing for all the “what if’s” we may encounter during the five school years that this plan is in effect. The plan should include current initiatives in progress, and be coordinated with the data we are capable of collecting. All of this is a statement easy to “get behind.”

Technology

Most seem supportive of the intent of DoDEA’s IT programs, but have reservations about the implementation and delivery of IT initiatives. Bandwidth, training and the timely access to IT support are the primary issues facing the schools, along with wireless-related issues (bandwidth, security restrictions). Participants suggested finding ways to better utilize the capability we currently have, such as Vices, virtual classes and web-learning, as well as utilizing the military technology and SMEs in educational delivery.

Human Capital

Area and District leadership had a fairly consistent opinion of the hiring, transfer and referral program, suggesting better timeline alignment and process improvement (“get a year ahead,” better scrutiny of candidates prior to interview selection), as well as allowing for some local hiring or transfer of non-critical or entry level positions.

Training was also an issue eliciting passionate opinion, with the content, delivery, access and accountability of the current career development program all called into question.

Student Transition

There is a wide array of programs in place to aid and track the transition of students from school to school, both inside and outside of the DoDEA organization, but according to interview participants greater guidance on the requirements of and responsibility for these programs is needed. There is little data sharing during transition, and very little consistency in the curriculum positioning from school to school.

Message and Communications

Based on the interviews, there does not seem to be a clear communication strategy and associated policy for the entire organization to include a single transferrable message, delivery methodology and feedback capability. Consistent, redundant messaging filtering down without editing is necessary from the top-down, creating a transparency in message to build two-way trust at all levels.

Operations

There is uniform support for streamlining the approval processes for budget, resourcing and acquisition and personnel, with some decision-making delegated to the local level where the service is performed or resource is expended. Participants recommended identifying a baseline capability and “leveling the playing field” from district to district through equitable budgeting and systematic business practice. Often, a breakdown between DoD rules and the culture of a host nation, as well as business operations can make standard operating procedures obsolete. The organization needs to allow for some flexibility to meet specific needs in those types of situations.

Curriculum

According to interview subjects, creativity in the delivery of the curriculum is limited by DoD policy and the “heavy-handed” DoDEA Headquarters approach. When allowed to impact the process, administrators are spending more time in the classroom to test and verify curriculum delivery, and adjust the “how we deliver” on a regular basis; a change that has significant positive impact.

SYNOPSIS

For the development of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, input from a wide-range of stakeholders is critical to ensure that the new CSP is informed and represents the beliefs of the DoDEA community. To assist in this effort, the Armed Forces Service Corporation (AFSC) conducted interviews with Branch Chiefs at the headquarters level of the DoDEA organization. AFSC was able to meet with these stakeholders face-to-face at the DoDEA Headquarters in Arlington, VA. Participants voluntarily offered to take part in interviews so they could provide their thoughts and ideas on the strategic mapping process for the development of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17. There were a total of nine discussions conducted.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

To facilitate the interview process, AFSC developed a set of discussion questions for this specific stakeholder group. Questions were grouped into the following subject areas:

1. Mission and CSP
2. Strategic Direction
3. Communications and Operational Strategies
4. Data Collection Strategies
5. Student Population and Student Transition
6. Curriculum

The findings of the discussions are organized around the six specific areas listed above.

Mission and CSP

Comments regarding the current mission statement were focused around the student population, terminology, and the uniqueness of DoDEA as an educational system. It was stated that the current mission does not address organizational differentiations, and there is no mention of the military. Since 2006, the mission statement has become less impactful because it does not include all 1.2 million military-connected students; however, given recent budget cuts, the organization needs to consider if it is realistic to address this additional student population. The mission statement should address the future of the organization, and not just today's activity. Additional phrases that can be impactful for the mission statement include "provide opportunities" or "areas of influence."

In regard to the CSP, it was reported that it does not have a daily operational impact. The CSP is simply an educational function, so it needs to make sense and be practical. Moving forward the CSP needs to address roles in implementing strategy at all levels, and better define roles and responsibilities. It is essential that the CSP has dedicated resources to monitor action items, and that policy be tied into CSP actions.

Strategic Direction

It was reported that there are many competing priorities within DoDEA, and that the importance of the CSP is minimized in regard to performance. Strategies for the future direction of DoDEA include improvement to performance evaluation, decentralizing certain processes, an accountability system, defining specific roles and responsibilities, and acknowledging budgetary changes. It was noted that the field needs to be included in decision processes, input to policy, and draft policy. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined in the CSP and responsibilities should not be stove piped. The performance evaluation needs improvement and needs to be tied to the CSP, and include everyone within the organization. Staff should be trained on setting and evaluating individual performance standards. Currently, budgetary changes are driving change, making this a perfect time for systemic direction. Any CSP strategic direction should include procurement, and associated processes.

Communication and Operation Strategies

It was stated that communication strategies (internal and external) should be included within the CSP. The organization should utilize web-based message distribution allowing everyone access to information everywhere. Information disconnect can be eliminated if DoDEA invests in communicating activities to stakeholders and impacted groups. Pertaining to operations, suggestions for improvement included a more diverse workforce, budget and finance processes tied to the CSP, a better foundation of project management, and consistency in decision making. A traditional foundation of project management would better manage the urgency of daily issues, and the consistency in decision making would help alleviate field issues, since the field has little latitude for making strategic moves.

Data Collection Strategies

It was reported that there is no data strategy for DoDEA. It is essential that DoDEA assure the data they are collecting coordinates with congressional requests and management control needs. It is also important that data collection activities must occur within current tools like ASPEN. It was suggested that DoDEA learn how to track students first, and then tests and measurements. There was a recommendation that DoDEA examine the model of the migrant worker for tracking

student movement. Other data collection strategies could focus around facilities projects, transportation, meals, and supply inventory, and property loss.

Student Population and Transition

It was noted that DoDEA needs to put forth a greater effort in getting public schools to work with them on reporting, because the current Impact Aid program has minimal leverage on reporting requirements. It would also be beneficial if a strategy is developed for tracking of reportable sub-groups. While the partnerships with DoDEA have some success, other strategies that could work for assisting transitioning students include a media blitz, a teacher exchange program, and proactively reaching out to the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). Additionally, DoDEA could improve on the delivery of the expectations of counselors, and their impact on student population.

Curriculum

According to interviewees, the TerraNova test has limitations on what data is collected, and there is a need for a more balanced assessment module. Since there is no criterion reference test for Goal 1 of the CSP for school years 2012-13 through 2016-17, DoDEA is unable to compare data points. It was stated that the DoDEA K-3 assessment for reading is a great step toward criterion testing.

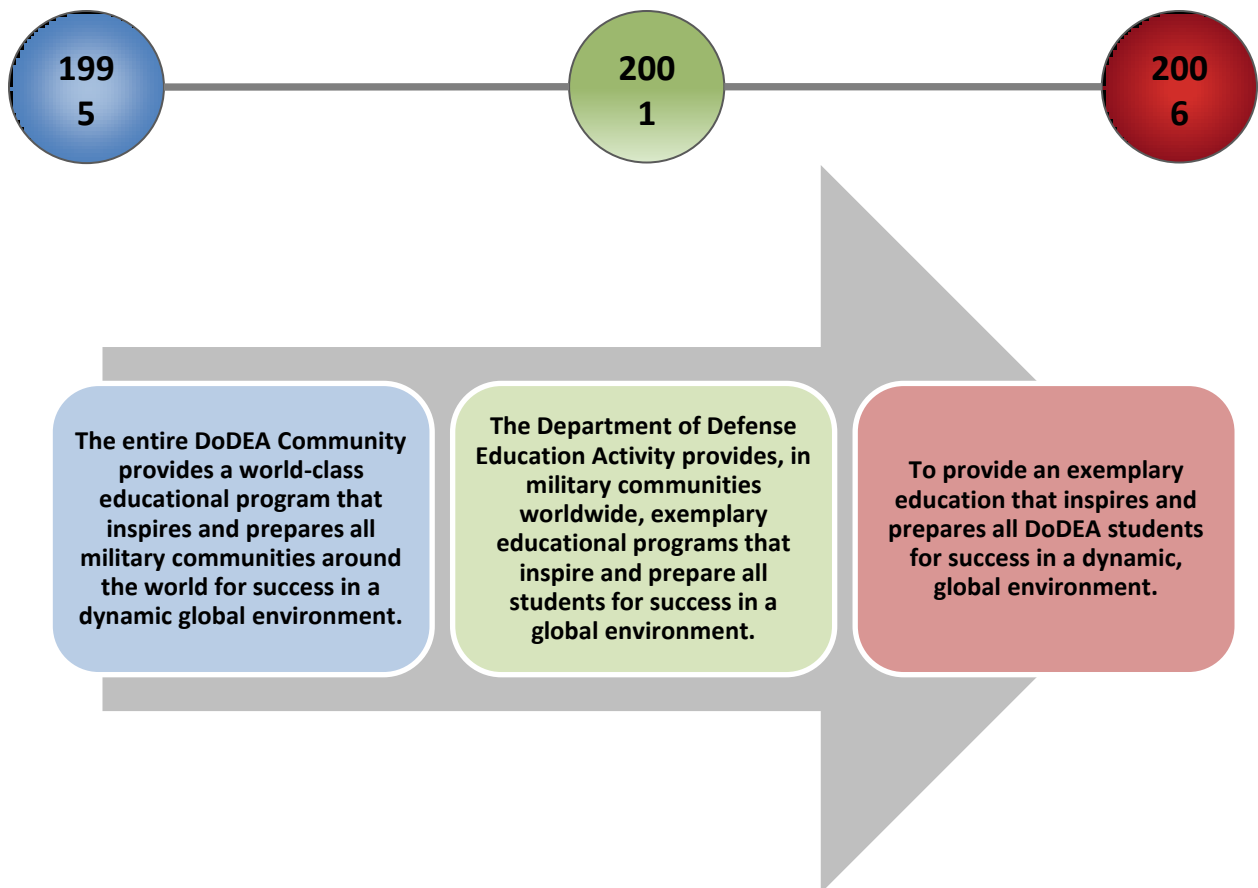
Appendix B: Previous DoDEA CSP Documentation

DoDEA Mission Statement Evolution

SYNOPSIS

DoDEA's first Community Strategic Plan (CSP) was written and published in 1995. Since that time, DoDEA has refined their mission statement with the development of each of their five-year CSPs. Mission statements examined in this section are from the 1995-2000 CSP, the 2001-2005 CSP, and the 2006-2011 CSP. It is important to note that in 2008 a committee convened to ensure congruency and alignment for goals, outcomes, measures and milestones for the 2006-2011 CSP. The result of this effort is the 2008 CSP Alignment. The mission statement for the 2008 CSP Alignment is not included in this section because there was no change from the 2006-2011 CSP.

The graph below shows how DoDEA's mission statement has evolved from 1995 to 2006.



SUMMARY FINDINGS

As illustrated, while the mission statement has changed during the development of each CSP, DoDEA has also preserved many of the same phrases and terminology from 1995 iteration. Phrases that are in each of the mission statements include: ‘inspires and prepares,’ ‘global environment,’ and ‘for success.’ One notable difference between the mission statements is the subject. In 1995 the statement addresses “the military community.” The 2001 mission statement addresses “all students,” and the 2006 mission statement addresses “all DoDEA students.”

Community Strategic Plan 2006-2011 and 2008 Alignment

SYNOPSIS

The Community Strategic Plan 2006-2011 was completed by a task group comprised of representatives from DoDEA, commands, and the Services. In April 2008, a “top heavy,” small task group, comprised of only representatives from DoDEA headquarters, Area Deputy Directors, and employee association officials, completed a 2008 Alignment. A large number of grassroots level stakeholders, such as parents and teachers, were not included in 2008 Alignment. The 2008 CSP Alignment provides the current roadmap for the organization and provides clarity for the strategies, actions, and measures that are utilized to measure success in achieving goals. The mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals in the 2008 CSP Alignment were preserved from the 2006-2011 CSP; however, objectives, strategies, actions, and measures were revised during the alignment.

The current DoDEA goals are:

1. Student performance
2. Performance driven management systems
3. A motivated, high performing workforce
4. Partnerships and communication promoting achievement

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The four goals are discussed below.

1. Goal 1 states that there will be the highest student achievement. To accomplish this goal, academic growth will be measured by norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments. Other areas for implementation and measurement include the implementation of a system-wide Grade 9 reading assessment and the implementation of a criterion referenced assessment (or other measure) for grades Pre-K-2. The CSP also highlighted areas such as school improvement plans, the reduction of unexcused absences, and co-curricular activities.
2. Goal 2 states that there will be performance-driven, efficient management systems. To accomplish this goal, there will be an integrated system for financial, procurement, logistics, and IT; in addition a Functional Work Steering Group will be established to identify requirements for the efficient management system of facilities, equipment, and materials. DoDEA also stated that they will provide safe, secure, and well-managed environments for conductive learning.

3. Goal 3 states that there will be a motivated, high performing, diverse workforce. The focus of this goal is centered on recruitment, hiring, retention, and personnel recognition; professional development, training, and leadership development; and utilizing the Quality Indicator Map (QIM) for program assessments, improvements, and professional development.
4. Goal 4 states that DoDEA will promote student development through partnerships and communication. Student development includes social, emotional, and academic growth. This goal stated that DoDEA will develop communication standards and a communications plan at all levels of the organization. In addition, DoDEA will continue to support military-connected students through its outreach to educational organizations and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs).

Appendix C:

DoDEA Data and Research Report Summaries

DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey SY 2010-11

SYNOPSIS

The DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey is administered biennially to parents and students to monitor DoDEA's success in meeting students' needs. The survey is administered to students in grades 4-12, and to sponsors (parents, guardians, etc) for each child enrolled in DoDEA schools from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Participation was voluntary but maximum participation was encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data. Questions in the survey related to school issues such as curriculum, instruction, standards, assessment, technology, student support, and communication.

This report gives DoDEA the opportunity to identify strengths, opportunities, threats, and weaknesses that can be used to formulate possible strategic actions and/or re-prioritization of initiatives to address the evolving needs of parents and students. In general, there were not significant differences between the three Areas (Europe, Pacific, Americas) in comparison with the total aggregate of DoDEA. There were some common themes among parents/sponsors of DoDEA students and the students themselves, as well as some differences. Both will be noted below.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Overall Education

- 57 percent of students gave public schools in the U.S. an 'A' or 'B' grade, whereas 42 percent of parents/sponsors and only 18 percent of national parents gave an 'A' or 'B.'
- 77 percent of parents/sponsors and 73 percent of students gave DoD schools an 'A' or 'B' grade.
- 79 percent of parents/sponsors, 74 percent of students, and 77 percent of national parents gave their school or their child's school an 'A' or 'B.'
- When asked, "How would you grade (your/your child's) school in preparing students in the following subjects, the response to Foreign Language received the lowest percent of combined 'A' and 'B,' 59 percent of parent/sponsors and 57 percent of students; specifically, DDESS parents/sponsors (45 percent) and students (45 percent) had the greatest impact on this low percentage.
- 17 percent of parents/sponsors responded "Don't know" when asked, "How satisfied are you with the assistance available to students who need academic help in (your/your child's) school?"

- There were some notable similarities and differences between parents/sponsors and students when they were asked, “In (your/your child’s) school, do you think each of the following is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all?”
- Crime/vandalism – only 22 percent of parents/sponsors responded this was a major or minor problem, whereas 43 percent of students that it was a major or minor problem
 - Bullying – 68 percent of students and 60 percent of parents/sponsors responded this was a major or minor problem
 - Childhood obesity – 53 percent of parent/sponsors and 50 percent of students responded this was a major or minor problem
 - Transportation – 75 percent of parents/sponsors answered this was not a problem at all, whereas 62 percent of students responded it was not a problem at all
 - Poor/outdated buildings and grounds – 41 percent of both parents/sponsors and students answered this was a major or minor problem
 - Lunch program – 47 percent of parents/sponsors and 58 percent of students responded this was a major or minor problem; within DDESS, 39 percent of parents/sponsors responded this was a major or minor problem, whereas 55 percent of students answered it was a major or minor problem
- There were some significant differences between parents/sponsors and students when they were asked, “Suppose you could choose your/your child’s teachers. Assuming they all had about the same experience and training, what personal qualities would you look for? Please check the two qualities below that are most important to you.”
 - Dedication to teaching profession, enthusiasm – 39 percent parents/sponsors, 15 percent students
 - Caring about students – 28 percent parents/sponsors, 38 percent students
 - Intelligence – 5 percent parents/sponsors, 18 percent students
 - Friendliness, good personality, sense of humor – 6 percent parents/sponsors, 52 percent students
 - Ability to inspire, motivate students – 59 percent parent/sponsors, 24 percent students

Assessment

- 15 percent of parents/sponsors and 23 percent of students believe there is too much emphasis on achievement testing in school, whereas 44 percent of national parents feel there too much emphasis.

Technology

- 59 percent of students, 51 percent of parents/sponsors, and 47 percent of national parents approve of the practice of students earning high school credits online over the Internet without attending regular school.

Student Support

- Generally speaking, the responses of parents/sponsors and students differed regarding questions about guidance counselor services.
- Answers to the question: “(Have you/has your child) used the following guidance counselor services at (your/your child’s) school this year?” were as follows:
 - Academic development – 38 percent parents/sponsors, 62 percent students
 - Personal/social development – 17 percent parents/sponsors, 47 percent students
 - Career planning – 34 percent parents/sponsors, 54 percent students
 - I/my child used the counseling services but I am unsure why or do not wish to say why – 13 percent parents/sponsors, 34 percent students
- 70 percent of students gave guidance counseling services at their school an ‘A’ or ‘B,’ whereas only 39 percent of parents/sponsors gave the same grades
- From a total of eight concerns listed, the three main concerns when transferring from a DoDEA to a public school were:
 - Transfer of grades – 38 percent parents/sponsors, 50 percent students
 - School’s awareness of military child issues (to include deployment support, frequent transitions, etc) – 51 percent parents/sponsors, 39 percent students
 - Similarity of education quality and standards – 76 percent parents/sponsors, 40 percent students
 - 9 percent of parents/sponsors and 27 percent of students had no concerns
- From a total of eight concerns listed, the three main concerns when transferring to a DoDEA from a public school were:
 - Transfer of grades – 31 percent parents/sponsors, 46 percent students

- Similarity of education quality and standards – 76 percent parents/sponsors, 45 percent students
- Availability of specialized programs (e.g. services for students with disabilities, gifted education) – 39 percent parents/sponsors, 20 percent students
- 12 percent of parents/sponsors and 28 percent of students had no concerns

Communication

Overall responses related to the effectiveness of communication mediums (school newsletters, school open houses, school web pages, email/letters from teachers and principals, phone, parent-teacher conferences, parent handbook) were similar for parents/sponsors and students

- Overall communication grades (combination of ‘A’ and ‘B’):
 - Communicating (my/my child’s) academic progress – 85 percent parents/sponsors, 76 percent students
 - Communicating (my/my child’s) behavior – 81 percent parents/sponsors, 75 percent students
 - Keeping me informed about school events and activities – 83 percent parents/sponsors, 74 percent students
 - Responding to my questions and concerns in a timely manner – 81 percent parents/sponsors, 64 percent for students (statistically significant)

Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts, 2011 Report to Congress⁴

SYNOPSIS

In June of 2011 DoDEA prepared and submitted a report to Congress titled *Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts*, which addressed the education options and performance of military-connected school districts. The report was required by Section 537 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010, which stated that:

[t]he Secretary of Defense shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, conduct a study on options for educational opportunities that are, or may be, available for dependent children of members of the Armed Forces who do not attend Department of Defense dependents' schools when the public elementary and secondary schools attended by such children are determined to be in need of improvement pursuant to section 1116(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

In response, DoDEA commissioned the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to compile a report on the *Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts*⁵. The Department of Defense (DoD) contracted with the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) and the Institute of Public Research to conduct assessments on facilities and educational opportunities to ensure that military-connected children are provided a world-class education. This analysis is known as the *Department of Defense (DoD) Education Review*⁶. Military-connected school districts were identified using data from the Impact Aid Program.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

According to *Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts*, military-connected districts were defined as:

A district that applied for Federal 8003 Impact Aid dollars and either had an average daily attendance (ADA) of military-connected students greater than 400, or had an ADA of whom 10 percent or more were military-connected students.

Based on the NDAA requirement, data was collected to compare the similarities and differences between military-connected students and non-military-connected students, as well as if schools attended by military-connected students and schools are “in need of improvement.” Based on

⁴ DoDEA, *Education Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts*, June 2011

⁵ American Institutes for Research, Kitmitto, Huberman, Blankenship, Hannan, Norris, and Christenson, *Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts Research Study*, May 2011

⁶ Center for Naval Analysis, Muller, Wenger, Miller, Randazzo-Matsel, Atkins, Marr, and Yamaski, *Department of Defense Education Review*, January 2011

the findings, DoD has made legislative and policy recommendations to Congress. It is essential to note that data was unavailable at the school and student levels; therefore, DoD was unable to identify schools that are “in need of improvement.”

The following are legislative and recommendations that DoDEA submitted to Congress.

1. **Improve data collection.** Make a legislative change to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which would require school districts to report on the performance of military-connected children, to efficiently and accurately support military-connected children in public schools. Creating a subgroup for military-connected children under the ESEA would provide the opportunity to identify where the military-connected children attend school, and would provide performance data that is needed to identify, evaluate, and, ultimately, improve the educational outcomes for military-connected children. It would also:

- Reveal their academic performance in reading, math, and science;
- Shed light on how well public schools are educating military-connected children and their career readiness;
- Provide critical information for military families as they choose schools;
- Assist DoD and researchers in evaluating the needs of military-connected children and target resources effectively; and
- Inform programs that support military-connected children.

(Note: The proposal does not request that schools and school districts be held accountable for the academic performance of the military subgroup, only that it be reported to the public.)

2. **Revise ED Impact Aid Program.** To effectively compensate military-connected school districts for the presence of military-connected children, the Administration has proposed changing the Impact Aid program to provide forward-funding for school districts experiencing growth. Currently, Impact Aid funds are distributed based on data from the previous year, rather than on current numbers. This change would allow school districts experiencing growth to apply for Impact Aid funds based on current year data.
3. **Adoption of the Common Core Standards for DoDEA Schools.** The Common Core Standards are a set of K-12 mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) content standards that are research and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, aligned with college and work expectations, and infuse 21st century competencies. The adoption

of the Common Core Standards by DoDEA would provide a number of advantages for military-connected children, such as:

- A more seamless transition of students between and among states;
 - Consistent assessments and resources;
 - More meaningful state-by-state comparisons;
 - A more consistent benchmark for student expectations.
4. **Collaborate with the U.S. Department of Education.** The Department will continue to work with ED to support military families and military-connected school districts to provide actionable results. ED has already responded by supporting a reportable military student subgroup, grant priorities, increased communication and solutions around district attendance policies for military-connected school districts, and student financial aid policies for service members.
 5. **Support for the Implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military-connected children.** Continued support by the Department as appropriate to States in implementing the Interstate Compact is important to addressing the needs of military families with school age children.

In addition, The Department is considering ways to expand the DoDEA Virtual High School to military connected-school districts. All of the recommendations to Congress continue to support military-connected students and provide a framework for enhancing their educational needs and providing a world-class education.

Furthermore, the AIR report, released in June 2011, key findings included:

1. **Similarities and differences in the areas of student achievement, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and demographics.** Data indicated military-connected districts had similar numbers or fewer numbers of students in populations considered “higher need” and fewer students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Overall, military-connected school districts are more diverse, but when compared to other districts that are similar in size and location this is no longer the case. In regard to student to staff ratios, military-connected districts and other districts were similar. Cost expenditures per student are lower in military-connected school districts, but when compared to districts that were similar in size and location the difference was negligible. It was reported that military-connected districts have more students in magnet schools than other districts. AIR additionally reported military-connected districts performed better than other districts in math and English language arts; however, this was attributed mainly to demographics. It

is important to note that AIR provided data at the district level, and therefore did not collect data at the individual school level. Based on the data collected, AIR did not provide recommendations on district demographics.

2. **Challenges parents face in securing quality education for their children.** AIR interviewed eight School Liaison Officers (SLOs) to evaluate how military families react to challenges in obtaining high quality education for their children. It is essential to note this sample size is small and not representative of all SLOs; however, AIR recommended it would be beneficial to conduct a future study of a larger sample of SLOs to better determine perceptions and experiences of military families. Twenty-five percent of SLOs recommended that a Student Database be established in order to ensure all military-connected children are receiving the proper resources and quality education. Thirty-seven percent of SLOs reported that the perceived quality of schools in a particular area affects the family's decision to relocate to the associated installations. Additionally, 75 percent of SLOs reported that several LEAs are overcrowded or lack capacity. Fifty percent of SLOs suggested that the Interstate Compact be better implemented for easing the stress families face during transition, and 50 percent of SLOs suggested providing information and training for families with children who have special needs. The report notes that it is essential that families have information on all school options within an area and that families are aware of the support that a SLO can provide.

DoDEA Grant Program⁷

SYNOPSIS

In 2007 the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allowed DoDEA to expand its reach to all military-connected students, including those who do not attend DoDEA schools. With the passage of the NDAA, DoDEA launched its Pilot Grant Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.

There are over 1.2 million school-aged children of military families. The DoD educates a small percentage of students (approximately seven percent, or 86,000 students, with about 25,000 of these students enrolled stateside) in DoD-owned and operated schools”.⁸ Additionally, “the average child in a military family moves six to nine times during his or her school career, which is three times more often than the average non-military child during a school career.”⁹ DoDEA’s Educational Partnership Program provides a variety of information and programs that support the unique challenges faced by military children. The Educational Partnership Program contains a Grant Program that provides funds to military-connected Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in support of student achievement and well-being.

The DoDEA Grant Program was launched to enhance learning opportunities for military-connected students at LEAs. The Pilot Program was initiated in FY 2008, and the first year of full funding for the Grant Program occurred in 2009. The two types of grants given to schools supporting military children throughout the United States are:

1. The Competitive Grant Program. This program is limited to school districts serving installations that are projected to have student population growth of 400 students or more due to force restructuring. This data is provided by the Military Services in the Report to Congress. This program’s focus is on enhancing student learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development.
2. The Invitational Grant Program. This program provides support for schools near military installations that experience frequent and/or sustained deployments. In addition, the Invitational Grant Program supports schools that are located in remote locations, or have other unique challenges.

Each grant lasts for three years and grants can range in size from \$100,000 to \$2,500,000, depending on the number of students at the military-impacted schools. All grant awards must

⁷ DoDEA, *Grant Program*, <http://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/grants.cfm>

⁸ DoDEA, *Education Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts*, June 2011

⁹ American Institutes for Research, Kitmitto, Huberman, Blankenship, Hannan, Norris, and Christenson, *Educational Options and Performance of Military-Connected School Districts Research Study*, May 2011

include an evaluation plan (overseen by an external evaluator) that consists of implementation and performance results and analysis. The objective of the Grants Program is to enable schools to sustain programs once the grant funding ends.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Since 2008, the DoDEA Grants Program has been awarding LEAs with funds for programs that support student achievement and well-being. A summary of funding for each year is presented below.

2008 Pilot Grant Program

In 2008, DoDEA awarded three schools \$300,000 each. The schools were located in Hawaii, South Carolina, and Texas. Respectively, the grants projects were focused on: student achievement in mathematics; improving student achievement at secondary schools through the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program; and a science coaching program.

2009 Grant Program

In 2009, DoDEA awarded \$56 million in grants to 284 schools that were located in 44 LEAs. These grants funds assisted more than 77,000 military-connected students. Grants projects were focused on the following areas: student achievement in reading, science and math; increased professional development in a variety of subjects for teachers and administrators; increasing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); transition assistance; increased use of technology in instruction; and increased after-school activities and after-school tutors

2010 Grant Program

In 2010, DoDEA awarded \$38 million in grants to 32 military-connected LEAs. These grant funds assisted more than 37,000 military-connected students. Approximately 26 of the 32 projects that received grants in 2010 were focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Other projects that received grants focused on reading comprehension, closing the literacy gap, transition assistance, and increasing AYP.

2011 Grant Program

In 2011, DoDEA awarded \$30 million in grants to 26 military-connected LEAs. These grant funds assisted more than 25,000 military-connected students. In addition, DoDEA awarded a three-year, \$3.9 million grant to the National Math and Science Initiative for Military Families. Grants projects were focused on the following areas: increased student achievement in math and science; STEM programs; improving reading comprehension and literacy; employing tutors; technology coaching and support for teachers; transition and support programs with highly

trained staff; using technology for academic success; supporting parental activities; differentiated instruction; enhancing “algebraic thinking;” and improving school culture.

Appendix D:

External Data and Research Report Summaries

Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment¹⁰

SYNOPSIS

The President has made the care and support of military families a high national security policy priority. In May 2010, he directed the National Security Staff (NSS) to “develop a coordinated Federal Government-wide approach to supporting military families.” With oversight from the National Security Staff (NSS) and Domestic Policy Council (DPC), a report entitled *Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment* was prepared by an Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) that included representatives from all Cabinet Secretaries' staffs and in response to Presidential Study Directive/PSD-9.

The IPC, with involvement from the National Economic Council, Office of the First Lady, and the Office of Dr. Jill Biden, identified four priorities to address the concerns and challenges of military families across the Services in both the Active Duty and Reserve Components. The four priority areas are listed below; priority #2 directly impacts DoDEA.

1. Enhance the well-being and psychological health of the military family,
2. Ensure excellence in military children's education and their development,
3. Develop career and educational opportunities for military spouses, and
4. Increase child care availability and quality for the Armed Forces.

At the time of the report, there were a total of 1.2 million school-aged children, of that total, 765,000 are children of active duty Service members and 85,000 attend DoD schools. 116,000 school-aged children have a parent who is currently deployed and 75,000 have had parents deployed multiple times. According to the report, “Research suggests that children of deployed parents experience more stress than their peers.” Although these children are also comparatively resilient, the cumulative effects of deployment and frequent moves can erode this resiliency. Again according to the report, “Too many of our military children in public schools feel like their classmates and teachers do not understand what they are going through.” In addition, 34 percent of Service members reported they were “less or not confident” that their children's school is responsive to the unique aspects of military life.¹¹

The quality of children's education is one of the most important criteria military families use when they select a place to live, and it affects the Armed Forces' overall recruitment, retention, and morale. Even when high quality education is available, the report states “the differences between State standards and requirements for academic and athletic participation, when coupled

¹⁰ The White House, *Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment Report*, January 2011

¹¹ Blue Star Families, *2010 Military Family Lifestyle Survey*, May 2010

to frequent relocations, can negatively impact achievement and participation for military children.”

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Under priority #2, three “Needs” with corresponding “Commitments” are identified to address the challenge of ensuring excellence in military children’s education and their development.

Need: Improve the quality of the educational experience

Commitments:

1. DoD will ensure that military children have school facilities that are safe, secure, in good repair, and provide an optimal learning environment that supports current and future educational requirements.
2. The President’s Educate to Innovate Campaign will mobilize its efforts to support military children’s math and science achievement. As a key step, the National Math and Science Initiative, in partnership with the White House Office of Science and Technology, DOD, and leading nonprofits and companies, will lead efforts to expand access for military-connected children to attend advanced placement classes in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to public high schools that serve a large number of military families.
3. DoD commits to making DOD Education Activity (DoDEA) schools a leader in the use of advanced learning technologies that have the potential to significantly improve student performance.

Need: Reduce negative impacts of frequent relocations and absences

Commitments:

1. DoD in coordination with the Council of State Governments, will pursue the complete development of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.
2. DoD will accelerate professional development programs to inform school staff of the academic challenges facing military children.
3. In order to encourage quality reintegration time, the Department of Education and DoD will provide guidance to school districts based on best practices for approving “block leave.”
4. [The Department of] Education will continue the Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) project, dedicated to serving military parents of children with special needs.

Need: Encourage the healthy development of military children

Commitment:

1. The Department of Interior (DOI), one of the largest Federal employers of youth ages 15-25 in conservation, will partner with DoD to identify military youth for employment opportunities.

Education of Military Dependent Students – Better Information Needed to Assess Student Performance¹²

SYNOPSIS

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 tasked the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review funds utilized by the Department of Defense (DoD) Impact Aid program. “Since the early 1990s, Congress has supplemented the Department of Education’s (Education) Impact Aid program by providing funds for the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Impact Aid program to compensate school districts with a high number of military dependent students.” According to the GAO report there are 1.1 million military dependent students and that the majority of these students attend public schools throughout the nation. Military mobility creates challenges in ensuring that military dependent students are receiving the best quality education. DoD Impact Aid aims to provide school districts with funds so that they are able to meet certain educational standards and to assist school districts that may have experienced revenue losses due to federal activities. GAO reviewed the following regarding DoD Impact Aid funds:

1. What is known about the utilization and effectiveness of the funds
2. Challenges faced by school districts serving military dependent students
3. How DoD and Education have collaborated together on the assistance of funds

In order to collect information on the areas of research GAO conducted a Web-based survey of all 154 school districts that have received Impact Aid in any year from 2001-2009. The response rate of the survey was 77 percent. In addition, GAO interviewed officials in seven districts in five states.

DoD Impact Aid is administered through the DoDEA Educational Partnership office and there are three components to funding:

1. Supplemental assistance. These are funds allocated to school districts in which military dependents compose at least 20 percent of average daily attendance during the previous school year.
2. Assistance for children with severe disabilities. These are funds allocated to school districts with at least two military dependent children with severe disabilities where the costs exceed certain criteria.

¹² United States Government Accountability Office, *Education of Military Dependent Students – Better Information Needed to Assess Student Performance*, March 2011

3. Assistance for districts significantly affected by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). These funds are allocated to school districts that have been heavily impacted as a direct result of force restructuring.

Other types of assistance that DoD provides for military dependent children include: DoDEA grants to schools, military family life consultants, school liaison officers, tutor.com, and Heroes at Home for preschool-aged children.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The GAO report focused on three research areas to determine the use of DoD Impact Aid supplemental funds. The following findings were reported in the GAO report:

1. **What is known about the utilization and effectiveness of the funds.** GAO concluded that “little is known about the specific use and effectiveness of DoD Impact Aid and there are no national data on military dependent students as a group.” Based on Web survey responses, it was reported that most school districts utilize their funds by putting them in a general fund and that use of the funds are generally not tracked. According to respondents, the general fund was used for salaries and benefits, supplies, property services (such as operations, maintenance, and repair of property), and other services such as food and transportation. Of important note is that the DoD Impact Aid funds “are not required by statute to be used for specific purposes or to be targeted directly to military dependent students.” In addition, there are no reporting requirements associated with expenditures of funds, and consequently there is no way to determine how the funds are specifically used.
2. **Challenges faced by school districts serving military dependent students.** The GAO report noted that “military dependent students’ frequent moves and educating military dependents with special needs are primary challenges for school districts.” Military mobility creates unique challenges for military dependent students. Respondents reported that mobility increased academic needs, which was attributed to inconsistency in state and district curricula, lack of connectedness with school, and behavioral issues in the classroom. In addition, students with special needs were reported as a challenge faced by school districts. Various strategies used to help address these issues include: additional counseling, technology, flexibility on academic requirements, providing literacy coaches, encouraging peer-to-peer support, and reaching out to military installations.
3. **How DoD and Education have collaborated together on the assistance of funds.** GAO concluded that “DoD and Education’s collaborative practices have assisted military

dependent students, their schools, and families.” In 2008 DoD and Education officials signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that identified five areas for collaboration. The five areas were quality education, student transition and deployment, data, communication and outreach, and resources. In addition, in May 2010, the White House developed a Presidential Study Directive on Military Family Policy. In response to this directive, DoD and Education have increased their collaboration to provide a quality education and support military dependent children.

Based on the research conducted, GAO has recommended that “Secretary of Education, in collaboration with Secretary of Defense, determine whether to require school districts to identify military dependent students as a distinct subgroup for reporting on their academic outcomes, such as test scores and graduation rates. This should include determining whether the Department of Education needs to obtain any additional legislative authority for this requirement, and seeking it from Congress.”

Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Defense and Department of Education

SYNOPSIS

In June 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was issued to establish a framework for collaboration between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Education (ED) to address the quality of education and the unique challenges faced by children of military families. At that time, the ongoing Base Relocation and Closure (BRAC) initiatives were relocating large numbers of military families, and therefore impacting the transition of students from DoDEA schools to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). This occurrence provided DoD and ED to jointly develop policy and support initiatives to improve the educational experience within LEAs, and military communities, by sharing successful educational options and best practices.

Additional legislation strengthened the mission.

1. NDAA 2007 directed the Secretary of Defense to work collaboratively with the Secretary of Education in easing the student transition from DoDEA schools to LEA's.
2. Section 291 of Title 10 of the United States Code allowed for the Secretary of Defense to make grants and cooperative agreements to support the local communities affected by base closures and relocations.
3. Section 291 of Title 10 of the United States Code directed the Secretary of Defense to work collaboratively with the Secretary of Education to develop programs to improve science, math and engineering skills in our education system in talent areas critical to the long-term success of the Defense Department.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The MOU lays out a series of objectives, individual agency responsibilities, and a plan of interaction between the two agencies by defining MOU participants and timetable for an inter-agency working group. Objectives are listed below.

1. Promote and enhance policies that will improve military children's education and overall well-being;
2. Advance the quality of educational opportunities for all military children;
3. Provide research-based academic, social-emotional and behavioral supports to facilitate seamless transitions for military children;

4. Provide leadership and advocacy programs to help military students cope with issues surrounding deployments;
5. Support foreign language education, including programs for strategic languages;
6. Assist military parents to be informed advocates of quality education choices;
7. Explore legislative options to address transition issues for military children;
8. Extend opportunities for student learning through support of online/virtual and other research-based models;
9. Provide research-based teacher and administrator professional development programs;
10. Forge effective partnerships with schools and districts;
11. Coordinate the DoD and ED Impact Aid programs;
12. Communicate with military families and organizations to show appreciation for their contributions;
13. Increase awareness of resources and tools available from ED and DoD.

The objectives were further expanded to potential actionable activities, including, but not limited to:

1. Improving the quality of education, primarily around research-based best practices in math, science, literacy and foreign language, as well as special education. Focus the educational improvement on improving the educator's skills via professional development opportunities.
2. Develop initiatives to improve student experience during periods of family transition and deployment, to include National Guardsmen and Reservists.
3. Define programs, policies and initiatives via data-driven decision making. Define specific data strategies to monitor, analyze and share collaborative data with Defense and Civil agency partners.
4. Create joint communication and outreach programs and strategies. Keep all stakeholders aware of available resources, progress, and activities, to include parents, educators, students, military leaders.
5. Smart utilization of resources. Coordinate the assignment, prioritization, deployment and analysis of DoD and ED resources. Share information to avoid redundant activities from programs like Impact Aid, military family assistance programs, assistance grants, state and LEA interaction, and parent awareness programs.

Facilities for 21st Century Learning¹³

SYNOPSIS

In April of 2011, DoDEA leadership convened a quorum of today's leading minds in the subject of the education of DoDEA's children for a four-day forum to brainstorm ideas on the process of education, the subjects DoDEA teaches and the tools DoDEA should employ in order to better educate the dependents of our military personnel into the 21st century. The 75 participants, a mix of industry, education, DoDEA, military and government personnel, were gathered and challenged to "shoot for the moon," and to "be bold, demand change" in developing ideas. Though these ideas may seem unfeasible now, they very well may be the solutions necessary to address the issues of a fast-moving social and technological environment, especially as DoDEA replaces 100 schools in the next five to seven years.

The participants were broken into work groups, for smaller discussion development. The workshop drove toward four major themes, examined through the lens of educational methods, facilities, technology and environmental sustainability:

1. **Differentiated Learning.** Treat all students as individuals, recognize needs vary greatly, and empower the learner to optimize potential through selective methods of instruction.
2. **Multiple Modalities.** Traditional configurations of learning institutions (spaces, spacing, lighting, etc.) are no longer applicable to modern learning techniques. Treat classrooms more like working spaces, with multiple use-capable spaces for selecting the right learning environment.
3. **Multidisciplinary Teaching.** Offer students the opportunity to approach subject matters from non-traditional methods, and cross-pollinate learning opportunities among multiple subjects for real world applications. This would require the educator to be capable in this methodology as well.
4. **Real-world Skills Development.** Extensive use of hands-on training and instruction, in order to better apply the knowledge gained in classroom environments.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The four-day idea exchange created a large number of proposals for improving DoDEA's organizational success, from the 50,000-foot strategic initiative to the detail-driven tactical activity. Initiatives and activities of note are:

¹³ Jacobs Engineering Group, *Facilities for 21st Century Learning: Work Session #1 Report*, April, 2011

1. Student-centered education. Challenging the leaders within DoDEA to re-think the traditional profile of student needs to include emotional, physical and social interactions. This crosses most potential strategic initiatives, while treating the educational process as a transactional two-way interaction. The intended outcome is to create a “whole student” at graduation, better prepared for the real-world environment as problem solvers and agile thinkers, while building a well-balanced student even through traumatic incidents during the student’s DoDEA career such as deployments and relocations.
2. Offer a portable, collaborative educational environment. Create spaces that are more flexible and adaptable, including outdoor spaces to enhance the activity-based educational experience. Leverage technological advances in remote learning and social and community interaction, while teaching real-world skills preparation.
3. Develop teachers as leaders and guides. Empower the student to learn in a project-based environment, similar to the working world they are building toward, where educators are coaching the learning experience as mentors. This cannot be successful without the inclusion of the educator in the development of the program, the clear communication and common understanding of incremental goals, easily transferable skills for training and re-training, and an agreed-upon definition of success.

Military Connection and Student Achievement – Final Analysis Plan¹⁴

SYNOPSIS

DoDEA commissioned the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to compile an analysis plan on the differences between military-connected students and other students. The plan provided by AIR does not contain final data figures, but contains some preliminary data that addresses background characteristics of military-connected students. The *Military Connection and Student Achievement Final Analysis Plan* is a framework for how data figures will be summarized and presented once they are collected and analyzed. The final report will analyze the difference between military-connected students and other students by exploring background characteristics and academic achievement data.

DoDEA has chosen a sample of eight military-connected school districts from which to collect data. The districts are: Anchorage, Alaska; Geary, Oklahoma; Hoke, North Carolina; Morongo, California; San Diego, California; Indian River, Delaware; El Paso, Texas; and Clover Park, Washington. Main variables when analyzing student achievement will include math and reading test scores.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Preliminary data is in regard to student characteristics and demographics. The data of note demonstrated that:

The sample of military-connected districts and all military-connected districts are similar in areas such as district finance and district inputs. However, the sample group varies from all military-connected school districts in regard to race/ethnicity and other demographics characteristics. The sample group has a smaller percentage of black and white students, a larger percentage of Hispanic students, English Language Learner (ELL) students, and students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

Future data areas that may have an impact on DoDEA's endeavors when working with military-connected school districts include:

1. Comparing achievement and demographics between military-connected students and non-military-connected students in grades 1-12 and grades 3-8

¹⁴ American Institutes of Research, Kitmitto, Huberman, Blankenship, Hannan, Norris, and Christenson, *Military Connection and Student Achievement Final Analysis Plan*, June 2011

2. Comparing achievement and demographics between military-connected students and non-military-connected students in grades 1-12 and grades 3-8 in the eight sample districts
3. Comparing percentages of military-connected students in grades 1-12 in the eight sample districts
4. Comparing achievement and demographics between military-connected students and non-military-connected students by grade
5. Achievement differences between military-connected and other students by grade for grades 3-8 in the eight sample districts
6. Comparing discipline, attendance, mobility between military-connected and non-military connected students
7. Comparing student characteristics between frequently moved military-connected and other military-connected students

Once this data is collected AIR will determine how military-connected students are similar to, or different from, non-military-connected students and how they compare in achievement, attendance rate, mobility, and discipline.

Community Strategic Planning Research Report¹⁵

SYNOPSIS

In July of 1995, DoDEA leadership commissioned The McKenzie Group, Inc., an education organizational consulting firm, to conduct an audit of the strategic issues developed by the DoDEA Strategic Leadership Team, and to test stakeholder opinion of the mission, goal, principals and initiatives forming the original DoDEA Community Strategic Plan (CSP), 1995-2000. Although 15 years have passed since the creation of the CSP and the related audit, there are a number of strategic issues examined in this report that lend a great deal of insight to the development of the fourth iteration of the CSP.

The methodology of the McKenzie Group does not vary a great deal from the current approach; only the order of in which activities occurred has been altered. The report generation process included environmental, stakeholder and customer analysis for situational awareness, a study of organizational capability and available resources, as well as a realistic baseline stakeholder opinion survey of DoDEA's values and strategic goals. Survey findings resulted in minor changes to the final CSP distributed later that year.

The goals of the McKenzie study were:

1. Examine DoDEA's direction against current situational awareness of outside influences.
2. Collect stakeholder input on the 10 proposed strategic goals set by the Leadership Team (eight of which were adopted directly from the National Education Goals, Goals 2000 Education Program initiative), allowing for a refinement cycle to customize these prior to the final iteration of the CSP.
3. Seek out participation from a broader set of stakeholders, to include parents, educators, administrators, and military personnel.
4. Enhance awareness of the CSP effort and organizational direction of the 10 goals, and elicit buy-in from the stakeholder groups.
5. Expand involvement not only in this process, but also in the roll-out of the strategic goal implementation plan.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

¹⁵ The McKenzie Group, Inc, Community Strategic Planning Research Report, August 1995

The themes addressed in the McKenzie reports indicate that the issues facing DoDEA in 1995 were similar to those facing the organization in 2011. Some of those issues are:

1. Concern that the plan will not alleviate the current resources and effort being applied to “a plethora of initiatives which bore no relationship to one another.”
2. Concern that the plan will be an “elaborate paper exercise that produces few results.”
3. Concerns that the plan will add new directives without providing resources to address them.
4. Concern that the plan will lead down a broad path of direction that causes fragmentation in effort.

Additionally, survey data collected from the various stakeholder groups illustrated numerous time-impervious issues, such as:

1. Communication at all levels is in need of substantial improvement.
2. A “vigorous endorsement” to relocate resource allocation closer to schools.
3. Issues faced in the remote locations by centralizing the human resources functions.
4. The need for greater accountability and measuring success, due to the high mobility of our student population.
5. Pressing need for co-curricular activities to be included in the student agenda.
6. A concern over wide variation of curriculum and delivery from location to location.
7. Integration of technology in all subjects taught.
8. Localized control of staffing levels and activities.
9. The inadequacy of the student and educator evaluation systems, as well as the evaluation of DoDEA initiatives after implementation.

Appendix E: Strategic Plan Matrix

Strategic Plan Matrix

Strategic Plan Research – Goals

Organization	Goals
DoDEA 2006-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance • Performance driven management systems • A motivated, diverse, and committed workforce • Partnerships and communication
Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase student achievement • Improve human capital • Provide a safe environment • Increase management effectiveness and efficiency • Improve public support and confidence in schools • Create a positive district culture
Montgomery County, MD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure success for every student • Provide an effective instructional program • Strengthen productive partnerships for education • Create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization • Provide high-quality business services that are essential to the educational success of student
Henrico, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will graduate upon completion of the Henrico County Public School curriculum that exceeds state and national standards • All students will develop life skills for individual success and total well-being • All students will graduate prepared to be self-sustaining and competitive as they pursue their personal aspirations • All students will practice civic responsibility and good stewardship of resources in their communities • All students will become responsible and effective users of technology
Mesa, AZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and achievement • Relevant and high-quality comprehensive curriculum • Highly qualified and highly effective personnel • Safe, healthy and nurturing learning environments • Students, staff, parents and community working together, etc.
Kennebunkport, ME	<p>GUIDING: All students will graduate from our schools with a world class education prepared to succeed in college, in work, and as involved, responsible citizens. SUPPORTING: • Teaching and learning • High performing administration, faculty, and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial planning and oversight • Facilities planning and management • Monitoring, updates, and reporting process
Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve student achievement, with a focus on bringing all students to grade level in reading and mathematics by 2014 • Increase the academic achievement of all high school students • Ensure the accessibility, affordability, and accountability of higher education, and better prepare students and adults for employment and future learning • Cross goal strategy on management
Brightstart Early Childhood System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build an early childhood system that addresses the following priority areas: Access to health insurance and medical homes, Mental health and social-emotional development, Early care and education, Parent education, family support • To develop service systems integration and partnerships to enhance children's ability to enter school healthy and ready to learn
Union City, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCPS will prepare students for the 21st Century • UCPS will meet the diverse needs of all students • UCPS will hire and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff, etc.
Boston, MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all students achieve MCAS proficiency • Close access and achievement gaps • Graduate all students from high school prepared for college completion and career success

Strategic Plan Research – Mission

Organization	Mission
DoDEA 2006-2011	To provide an exemplary education that inspires and prepares all DoDEA students for success in a dynamic, global environment.
Houston, TX	The Houston Independent School District exists to strengthen the social and economic foundation of Houston by assuring its youth the highest-quality elementary and secondary education available anywhere.
Montgomery County, MD	To provide a high-quality, world-class education that ensures success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning.
Henrico, VA	Henrico County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence, will actively engage our students in diverse learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens.
Mesa, AZ	The mission of Mesa Public Schools is to develop a highly educated and productive community, one student at a time.
Kennebunkport, ME	To support and challenge every student to develop the skills, knowledge, and character needed to be responsible, productive, and adaptive learners, workers, citizens, and leaders prepared to succeed in our global society.
Department of Education	The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.
Brightstart Early Childhood System	Louisiana will create and sustain a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system. This system will ensure that families and communities provide young children (0-5) with opportunities for optimal emotional, social, physical and cognitive development.
Union City, NJ	Preparing ALL students to succeed is the mission of Union County Public Schools.
Boston, MA	As the birthplace of public education in this nation, the Boston Public Schools is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families and students to develop within every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

Strategic Plan Research – Vision

Organization	Vision
DoDEA 2006-2011	Communities committed to success for all students!
Houston, TX	To earn so much respect from the citizens of Houston that HISD becomes their prekindergarten through grade 12 educational system of choice.
Montgomery County, MD	A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.
Henrico, VA	Henrico County Public Schools will be the PREMIER school division in the United States.
Mesa, AZ	Mesa Public Schools – Unprecedented Excellence in Education
Kennebunkport, ME	None
Department of Education	None
Brightstart Early Childhood System	Louisiana's young children and their families are safe, healthy, and reach their full potential.
Union City, NJ	None
Boston, MA	The Boston Public Schools Graduate: • Loves to learn, views the world as a classroom without walls, and thinks critically about the issues within it • Succeeds academically in college-level courses across content areas • Masters verbal and written expression in English, with emerging proficiency in a second language • Uses mathematical skill, scientific inquiry, and state-of-the-art technology to invent new solutions to persistent and unanticipated problems, etc.

Strategic Plan Research – Values/Guiding Principles

Organization	Values/Guiding Principles
DoDEA 2006-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success for all Students • Trust and respect for others • Uncompromising advocacy for students • Development of lifelong learners • Equal access to quality, rigorous education • New and motivating challenges to inspire excellence • Teaching with high expectations • Safe and stable learning environment
Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety above all else • Student learning is the main thing • Focus on results and excellence • Parents are partners • Common decency • Human capital
Montgomery County, MD	MCPS is committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability, learns and succeeds. Student outcomes shall not be predictable by race or ethnicity. MCPS has high expectations for all students, believing that all children can learn at high levels, etc.
Henrico, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in accountability • We believe in a school community grounded in respect and integrity • We believe in continuous improvement to meet and exceed the challenges of a changing environment • We believe that our students can and will learn • We believe that success requires shared responsibility among all staff, parents, students, and community as stakeholders • We believe that excellence is attainable by all, etc.
Mesa, AZ	In Mesa Public Schools we believe: • Each child is important • Learning is our focus • Collaboration and innovation are indispensable • Sound fiscal stewardship is essential • Diversity increases our opportunities • Success is expected and celebrated
Kennebunkport, ME	We believe: • All students can learn • All students can succeed in life • All students are unique and deserve learning opportunities that engage their interests, passions, and aspiration • All students deserve to be surrounded by staff members who are skilled, knowledgeable, and caring, etc.
Department of Education	None
Brightstart Early Childhood System	None
Union City, NJ	None
Boston, MA	None

Strategic Plan Research – Sample Initiatives

Organization	Sample Initiatives
DoDEA 2006-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 2008, annual program evaluations are conducted • By June 2009, a professional development plan for program evaluation with teacher and administrators modules is developed • By December 2009, an assessment plan is developed
Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective teacher in every classroom • Effective principal in every school • Rigorous instructional standards and supports • Data driven accountability • Culture of trust through action
Montgomery County, MD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor student performance • Achievement steering committees • Middle school reform • Developing mathematical proficiency for all students • Monitoring the instructional program • Parent advisory council, etc.
Henrico, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a structure to merge features of current applicant tracking systems (WinOcular and iRecruitment) for increased efficiency in tracking excellent candidates • Every student will have an academic and career pathway starting in the 7th grade that will be updated annually, etc.
Mesa, AZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate current educational offerings, and research current literature and programs to develop a plan for what should be sustained, modified, implemented or deleted • Conduct an annual evaluation of curriculum to state standards, etc.
Kennebunkport, ME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development for K-12 faculty that focuses on instructional strategies and assessment practices that support 21st century learning, etc.
Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, analyze, and publicly disseminate disaggregated student information on a timely basis • Support projects expanding offerings and participation in advanced mathematics and science classes, etc.
Brightstart Early Childhood System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training and information materials for pediatric specialists, nurses, social workers, discharge staff, early care and education providers regarding uses and benefits of a medical home • Embed training on emotional, behavioral and social development of children and relationship based practices into all programs serving children birth through five (e.g., Early Head Start/Head Start, Part C-Early Steps, early care and education providers) with special emphasis on the birth to three population, etc.
Union City, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will be disaggregated and provided to school staff and key stakeholders • Each high school will identify strategies to prepare students for the SAT • 21st Century systems will be identified and implemented, etc.
Boston, MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen teaching and school leadership • Replicate success and turn around low-performing schools • Deepen partnerships with parents, students, and the community • Redesign district services for effectiveness, efficiency, and equity

USD P&R Strategic Plan FY 2012-2016

USD P&R	
Mission	Lead the nation in creating an integrated, agile, responsive, and ready Total Force capable of accomplishing 21st century Missions.
Vision	A bold, empowered organization committed to the development of the Total Force, actively shaping the environment and embracing selfless service to the defense of our nation.
Focus Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total force readiness • Care for our people • Culture of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency
Strategic Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Goal 1 - Provide the right policies coupled with state-of-the art practices and tools to attract, train, educate, shape, sustain, and retain diverse talent to anticipate and meet the requirements of the 21st Century Total Force • Strategic Goal 2 - Strengthen individual and mission readiness and family support, and promote wellbeing • Strategic Goal 3 – Deliver quality healthcare at an affordable cost while improving medical readiness • Strategic Goal 4 - Strengthen the way that P&R works to create a high-performance culture and organization • Strategic Goal 5 – Communicate with “one-voice.”
Sample Initiatives	Review and ensure excellence in educational opportunities for P-12 education systems to improve outcomes for all 1.2m children of Military families.