



2008 PETE TAYLOR PARTNERSHIP OF EXCELLENCE AWARD™

Wednesday, July 23 - 6:30 pm

Military Child Education Coalition™
10th Annual Conference
Grapevine, Texas

Army

Navy

Marines

Air Force

Coast Guard



MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION™

108 East FM 2410, Suite D
Harker Heights, Texas 76548

(254) 953-1923
(254) 953-1925 fax

WWW.MILITARYCHILD.ORG

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During his tenure as Chairman of the Military Child Education Coalition™, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Pete Taylor played a critical role in the establishment of partnerships between military installations and school districts serving military-connected children.

In 2004, in recognition of General Taylor's work and dedication to helping America's military children, the MCEC® Board of Directors established the Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award™. This annual award encourages and applauds the outstanding partnerships that exist between military installations and school districts and brings special recognition to those partnerships that demonstrate General Taylor's long-held belief that "goodness happens at the local level."

*We congratulate the 2008 winners of the
Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award™.*

2008 Outstanding Partnership Award

Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Lawton Public Schools, Lawton, Oklahoma

“... Working together for the benefit of our military families is not something out of the ordinary for us; it is simply the way we do business, and it is the right thing to do.”

These were the words of Barry Beauchamp, superintendent of Lawton Public Schools, in a letter of endorsement of the Fort Sill/Lawton Public Schools application for the 2008 Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award™.

With its Local Action Plan adopted in 2001, Fort Sill/Lawton works with military families, civilian and military leaders, educators and other members of the community to establish support systems and processes that promote smooth transitions for military dependents and to resolve other educational issues related to them.

Among these numerous support systems is the Army Partnership with Lawton Area Schools (APLAS - pronounced “applause”), which includes partnerships between military units and elementary schools, mentorship programs for middle school students, a leadership program for the three high schools, and a parental involvement program for military families throughout the district.

Also instrumental in this partnership is the Lawton-Fort Sill Military Child Committee, a 30-person group composed of Lawton Public Schools (LPS) administrators, principals, school counselors, personnel from Fort Sill Youth Services, Morale, Welfare & Recreation, the APLAS program, the post’s liaison representative, a member of the Lawton Board of Education, a representative of the local MCEC® Parent to Parent™ team, students and military parents.

Members of this committee understand they are part of a “work in progress” that constantly changes to meet the needs of the children they serve. This philosophy has helped the committee successfully adapt to a variety of changes affecting military dependents, including 9/11, deployments and a State of Oklahoma shortfall in school funding.

In addition to sponsoring traditional Military Child Education Coalition™ institutes and following the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) guidelines, this partnership also has instituted numerous innovative programs, including mentoring and leadership programs, upgrading of the LPS Web site, hiring students to welcome incoming students during the summer, establishing the “buddy system” at most schools, providing special workshops for parents, enlisting political leaders to work on legislative issues affecting military families, paying special tributes to those soldiers deployed, establishing an Adopt-a-Soldier program and implementing service learning sessions to assist those students who want to compete for post-secondary educational opportunities.

Pete Taylor Partnership Award judges agreed with the assessment of Major General Peter M. Vangjel, commanding general of Fort Sill, who said of the Sill/Lawton partnership:

“LPS is a strong advocate for soldiers and their families, and the partnership between this district and our military installation is second to none.”

Exemplary Partnership Award

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Cumberland County Schools, North Carolina

In 2007, after five years of implementation of a successful Local Action Plan, the Cumberland County Schools (CCS) hired a full-time person for the position of Military Child Support Liaison, resulting in an incredible synergy that has enhanced the already firm partnership between CCS and the Fort Bragg military community. Successful programs initiated by this ongoing military/school relationship has earned Fort Bragg and CCS the Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Exemplary Award™ for 2008.

In addition to the hiring of the Military Child Support Liaison, CCS also has instituted these special programs:

- Military Child Task Force, a forum which allows each person to better understand the needs that exist and, by working collaboratively, meet the identified needs.
- Public School Systems with Military Support Position Alliance, an alliance that allows North Carolina school systems to share ideas about programs, interventions and services related to military students and military communities.
- Military Focus in Public Relations (Global Perspective on Military-Connected Students), an emphasis on promoting the topic of military-connected students through various media outlets.
- Crisis Response, a program in which CCS support services are offered in cases where a military family suffers trauma or loss. This includes a trained trauma team.
- Embedded Professional Development, a course being offered to school faculties entitled “Working with Military Families.”

- Military Family Resource Binder, a school-based reference system that deals with topics such as military lifestyle, transition issues, deployment issues, working with military families, and the Local Action Plan.
- Numerous other CCS-involved programs that affect military students, including MCEC® initiatives, letter writing campaign to troops, Adopt-a-Soldier, welcome packets, a superintendent's deployment letter, special bookmarks, the CCS Web site, a student services information brochure, community readiness fairs, Exceptional Family Member Program and the Fayetteville Family Crisis Center, which provides support to spouses of deployed service members.

In support of the Cumberland/Bragg application for the Pete Taylor Award, a deployed service member whose sons attend CCS wrote:

“With every deployment, my children were offered exemplary support in the form of counseling sessions, and an array of activities that were coordinated through the school system and outside community agencies. The Cumberland County Public Schools go above and beyond to truly ensure that No Child is Left Behind.”

Recognized Partnership Award



Los Angeles Air Force Base, California
Los Angeles Unified School District, California

Although Los Angeles Air Force Base (LAAFB) is unique in many ways and its military-connected children are scattered in a wide area, making school issues complex, its Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) has managed to create a solid partnership with surrounding school districts, helping level the education playing field for military-connected students. This effort has earned the 2008 Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Recognized Award™.

Los Angeles Air Force Base, home of the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC), is the only active duty military installation in the Los Angeles area, and it is very “purple” in that it also serves a number of Guardsmen and Reservists as well as more than 10,000 retirees.

Children of military personnel at LAAFB attend public, private, charter and home schools with public schools assigned by the district in which the child resides. Children living on base are a part of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest school district in the nation with 801 schools and approximately 708,000 students. California law gives students a wide choice of where they may attend school.

This presents LAAFB a number of obstacles when it comes to military-connected students: identifying where they attend school, identifying the proper school and program for each child, communicating with the large number of schools and districts where military children attend, communicating to parents the available school options and facilitating inter-district transfer requests.

The Military Child Education Task Force, chaired by the LAAFB School Liaison Officer (SLO), is made up of representatives of each of the six wings at the base, the command chief, first sergeants, Youth Center, Family Advocacy Program, Exceptional Family Member Program, Spouses Club, the reserve component, security forces and interested parents. Members of the group were tasked with being the eyes and ears for any school concerns of personnel in their section.

Many issues brought to the task force have been solved by the SLO and A&FRC. These range from a student being allergic to a resident cat at one school to the honors program at a high school, to the lack of communication between the base and one of the high schools. A concern involving students with Special Needs was also resolved by the A&FRC and SLO.

The A&FRC and SLO also have helped make it possible for schools to receive used equipment from the base without going through extensive “red tape,” have cooperated with chamber of commerce groups in partnership projects with education committees, helped establish an Education Conference luncheon, assisted with a teacher appreciation luncheon, assisted with school transfer permits, set up a biannual summit with LAAFB and local school districts, arranged for an annual carpool meeting, hosts an annual School Information Fair, created what is basically a school-related Web site on the Air Force Portal and set up a desktop survey so that the whereabouts of the scattered military-connected children can be easily accessible.

Dr. Richard Vladovic, District 8 Board Member, Los Angeles School District, speaking of the partnership with LAAFB, had this comment:

“Together, we have found ways to improve both the academic transitioning of our military students as well as our communication and our processes - it’s been a mutually positive experience.”

Outstanding Partnership Awards Individual Projects

*The US Army Garrison - Schweinfurt,
US Army 172nd Brigade, the 1-91 CAV Group,
and Schweinfurt Elementary School (DoDDS)*

With more than 75 percent of Schweinfurt Elementary School (SES) students having a deployed parent, it became apparent that it was essential that the school and military units at the post in Germany needed to work together to best serve their military families and especially the children.

Numerous projects were developed to serve this end, including the production of more than 500 video messages of children and family members sending greetings to deployed family members; cooperative efforts with the Garrison and Brigade to develop actions and activities to support children and families; working with the Garrison Army Community Services director to obtain additional deployment support educational material, information and support for students and families; and the organization of a campaign to donate sweat suits to wounded soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Miska, former deputy commander of the 172nd Brigade Combat Team, summarized the effective program thusly:

“The net effect of partnership efforts within Schweinfurt helped create tremendous effects for the entire community. Children felt safe within the school through caring staff and faculty that understood the military mission. Soldiers felt secure knowing their children were well cared for by SES. The teachers and faculty understood the military missions and could better relate to the stress many of the kids felt while missing their moms and dads.”

Outstanding Partnership Awards Individual Projects



*The US Army Garrison - Detroit Arsenal, Michigan
Mount Clemens Community School District, Michigan*

When Washington Elementary Academy in the Mount Clemens Community School District experienced a problem with children in its Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired (POHI) class receiving needed physical activity, the Detroit Arsenal's Selfridge Child and Youth Services (CYS) Youth Sports Program readily agreed to help.

The CYS group began going to the school twice a month to offer adaptive physical education classes for the POHI students. Parents, kids and faculty were so appreciative. The classes are offered once a week now to approximately 35 students. All the sports have been adapted to accommodate all of the children and their special needs. There are ramps for bowling so children in wheelchairs can participate, large soft soccer balls, and scooters large enough for a child to lie on and be pulled around. The focus is on gross motor skills development, basic fundamentals of sports and having fun improving skills. Abilities of the children range from being in a wheelchair with very limited mobility, to children walking with braces or walkers, to mental disabilities or just having difficulty walking.

“Some children can not even talk, but all you have to do is look at the smiles on their face and that says it all,” the application narrative states.

Outstanding Partnership Awards Individual Projects



*Kaiserslautern Middle School, Germany
Defense Commissary Agency, Germany*

Recognizing that more than one-third of the students in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) are overweight, Dr. Susan Hargis and Mrs. Kay Blakley forged a partnership to create a standards-based, data-driven, student-focused nutrition awareness program that not only educates students at Kaiserslautern Middle School (KMS) but also has the potential to benefit every military dependent child across the world.

Dr. Hargis is principal of Kaiserslautern Middle School, and Mrs. Blakley is chief spokesperson and consumer advocate for Defense Commissary Activity (DeCA) and is regularly featured on DeCA television spots on Armed Forces Radio and Television Network around the world. In search of a distinctive way to drive home the concept of healthy food choices to her students, Dr. Hargis contacted Mrs. Blakely and the partnership was formed. It has the overwhelming support of the KMC's 431st Air Base Group Command.

Called "Food for Thought," the program includes nutrition awareness in core subject areas and in health and physical education classes. Lessons were created in all content areas and provided opportunities for students to demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and eating habits. The Vogelweh Commissary, where most of the military families shop, became an extension of the classroom where students, parents, and teachers received first-hand knowledge of how to shop, how to prepare food, and how to get the most nutritional benefit from their daily diets.

Body Mass Indexes for participant students will be taken in October, with the expectation that the program will be proven successful. Sponsors say that the "Food for Thought" program can easily be established in other military communities.

Kimberly Howe, 6th Grade teacher, Kaiserslautern Middle School, said of "Food for Thought":

"I feel this program honors our military children by making their health an integral part of their education. When students understand we care about their personal health as well as their academic education, I believe it speaks to each student's sense of self and self-worth."