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Activities to Support Academic and Transition Outcomes for Military-Connected Students and Their Families:

Findings from the 2009 DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants



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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Activities to Support Academic and Transition Outcomes for Military-Connected Students and Their Families:

Lessons Learned from the DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants

August 2013



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Introduction to the 2009 DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants

In 2007, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) received authority in the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act to work collaboratively with the U.S. Department of Education to meet the educational needs of the 1.2 million military-connected students who attend public schools across the country. DoDEA established The Educational Partnership Program to provide resources, including grants, to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support schools that enroll large numbers of military-connected students. Through the Educational Partnership Program, LEAs develop strategies and programs to support the academic, social, and emotional needs of military-connected students and their families. In 2009 (the Program's first year), 44 LEAs in 20 states received three years of DoDEA funding to raise student academic achievement and ease military students' transitions. These projects served approximately 87,300 military-connected students attending 298 schools and their families near 48 military installations (see Exhibit 1 and Appendix A). As the grant period ended in 2012, grantees achieved long-term sustainable outcomes through planning, professional development (PD), and enhanced curriculum.

This report highlights the most innovative, effective, or sustainable aspects of each 2009 grant and is one in a series of reports that features programs implemented with DoDEA funds. The first report was an award-winning publication—*Strategy Boosters: Lessons Learned from the DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants*¹—that profiled successful activities implemented by selected 2009 and 2010 grantees in four strategy categories: (1) professional development, (2) technology in the classroom, (3) formative assessments, and (4) transition support. *Strategy Boosters* won First Prize in 2013 from the National Association of Government Communicators for cost-effective excellence in multimedia communications. Together, *Strategy Boosters* and the current report illustrate DoDEA's ongoing effort to share lessons learned from its investment in educational opportunities for the nation's school-age, military-connected children. These and future reports from DoDEA's Educational Partnership Program will provide superintendents, principals, teachers, and other school personnel with a roadmap for how to develop and implement strategies that will impact student achievement and support the significant social and emotional needs of military-connected students.

Grantee-Developed Program Activities

The 2009 grantees implemented an extensive range of projects designed to improve student achievement, ease transitions, and introduce 21st century skills and technology to students in schools with high military student enrollment. All grantees completed quarterly and annual evaluation reports that contain information on student outcomes as well as project planning, implementation, and evaluation. In collecting data for the reports, grantees also gained significant insight into which project activities most influenced school culture and student achievement in sustainable ways. Many grantees used this process data to improve project implementation. The DoDEA-funded Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center (ETAC) provided support to grantees as the schools and districts collected, managed, and reported evaluation data.²

All projects included multiple activities and goals, and the grantee summaries in this report offer contextual details about how selected activities supported military-connected youth and their families.

¹www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/docs/2012_StrategyBoosters.pdf.

²Synergy Enterprises, Inc. implements the ETAC, and provides the DoDEA Educational Partnership Program with technical assistance in grant monitoring and program evaluation. The ETAC is dedicated to building DoDEA grantees' evaluation capacity.

1. Project Leadership

Implementing a DoDEA project requires a project director or coordinator who has content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and leadership skills. The project leader must also demonstrate patience and flexibility—essential elements to build relationships throughout project development, implementation, and evaluation. To create confidence and trust among the school staff, the leader must demonstrate reliability, responsiveness, and credibility. In the 2009 projects, administrators served as project leaders. They were knowledgeable about effective instruction, skilled in supervising teachers, and adept at implementing new curricular programs. These leaders met regularly with their project staff and teachers to review project data and make decisions responsive to the needs of the project staff and students. Project leaders focused on evaluation from the start to familiarize evaluators with the project context, and to facilitate the data collection and information sharing between stakeholders. When leaders remained actively engaged in the work of the project and knowledgeable about its evaluation, staff and teachers felt supported and understood the importance of the project goals.

2. Intended Outcomes

With content and pedagogical knowledge, flexibility, and responsiveness comes the challenge of maintaining constant focus on the intended project outcomes. Collecting, managing, and reviewing data continuously with all stakeholders are the keys to maintaining focus on outcomes. Reliable data and information are critical in order to initiate and inform discussions and decision-making about whether the activities and strategies support the intended outcomes. Accurately and meaningfully capturing the impact of activities requires determining indicators that measure outcomes. Providing valuable feedback to staff requires identifying project activities and strategies aligned with outcomes and benchmark measures linked to strategy implementation. Therefore, successful project leaders (1) identified specific interim annual outcomes that were measurable (e.g., third grade math scores of military-connected students will increase by 3 percent over the baseline scores), (2) identified methods for monitoring the implementation of strategies to meet the outcomes (e.g., observe teachers' use of math applications on the iPads in classrooms or collect professional development session feedback on the use of iPads in math class), and (3) collected and analyzed the project data to continually make informed decisions. This approach is multi-faceted—using the data to build the capacity of all school staff is key to remaining focused on both short and long-term outcomes.

3. Data Management

Keeping the focus on outcomes requires a data management system that tracks both formative assessment data as well as historical information such as previous grades, assessment scores, and subgroup status (e.g., military-connected, disability). Reviewing the data continuously provides detailed information on individual student progress. If possible, the data management system should track students' aggregate results on a specific content standard. With these data, teachers have the tools to differentiate instruction and can determine the effectiveness of various instructional strategies. As with any new initiative, teachers and administrators must participate in ongoing professional development as well as meetings to maximize the use of the data management system.

4. Technology Integration

Many 2009 DoDEA grantees introduced new technology to schools and classrooms to support 21st century learning. But simply having the technology available does not guarantee its use. First, the school must have the infrastructure and personnel to support both students and staff as they learn how to use the new technology. Teachers should participate in ongoing professional development and

have the opportunity to work with the technology before the school distributes netbooks and hand-held devices. Professional development should move beyond the mechanics of equipment use; job-embedded professional development helps teachers learn how to integrate the technology into the curriculum and design meaningful teaching and learning activities. Finally, the technology infrastructure must be able to accommodate multiple users simultaneously. Although schools may have high-speed Internet access through networks, many need additional capacity to accommodate the concurrent use of multiple types of equipment.

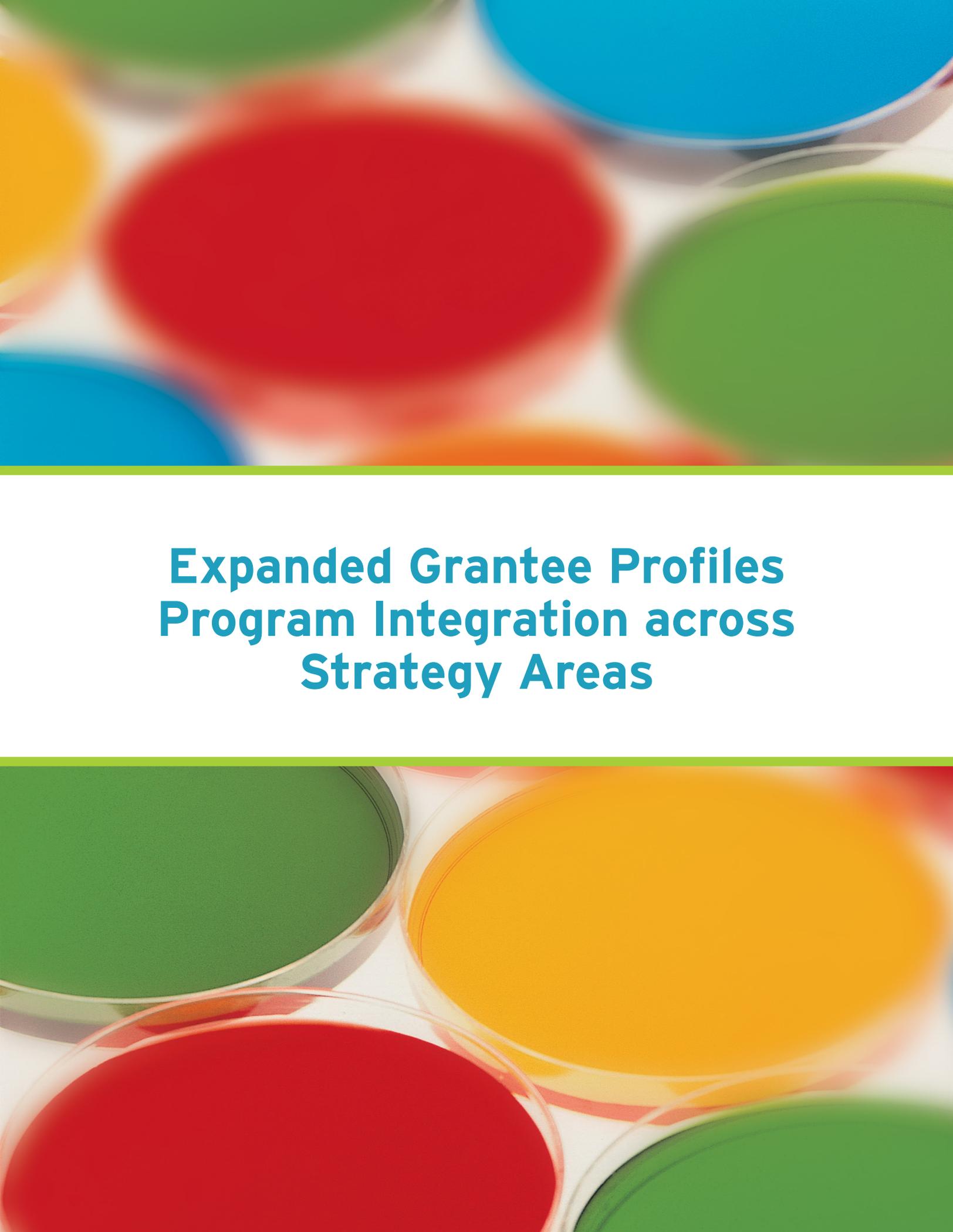
5. Ongoing Professional Development

Many participating districts learned that professional development must be continuous in order to sustain innovations and new teaching and learning activities. Project directors discovered that developing a collaborative vision for sustained changes is necessary to maintain administrator and teacher engagement. PD must provide opportunities for teachers to use or experience the new instructional strategies and technology prior to full implementation. Developing teacher leaders or facilitators is a cost-effective way to provide building-level support and sustain the knowledge and skills gained in the PD sessions.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

Helping all stakeholders understand each other's needs can be daunting. Students, school administrators, teachers, families, and installation liaisons should have opportunities to listen and share ideas about the project. The evolving nature of a project means that building relationships and understanding the capacity of each stakeholder group is essential to building the foundation for sustainable systemic change.



The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred view of several petri dishes containing agar of various colors: red, blue, green, and yellow. The dishes are arranged in a cluster, with some in the foreground and others in the background, creating a sense of depth. The colors are vibrant and saturated. A thin green horizontal line separates the top image from the text area, and another thin green horizontal line separates the text area from the bottom image.

**Expanded Grantee Profiles
Program Integration across
Strategy Areas**

Expanded Grantee Profiles Program Integration across Strategy Areas

DoDEA launched the Educational Partnership Program in 2009, and nearly all of the 44 first-year grantees successfully implemented strategies in at least one grant program category (i.e., professional development, innovative technology, individualized instruction, and support structures for military-connected students and families). Significantly, 13 of the first-year grantees implemented exemplary strategies *in more than one grant program category*. This chapter contains profiles for these 13 grantees that illustrate their successful integration of multiple or complex strategies that supported military-connected students; later chapters highlight the other first-year grantees who successfully implemented strategies in a single program category. As with any new initiative, the DoDEA Educational Partnership Program's first-year grantees experienced many challenges:

- (1) implementing major changes without a comprehensive system to collect, manage, analyze, and report data;
- (2) developing goals and objectives that align with resources and other state or district initiatives;
- (3) building an infrastructure to ensure that all technology is compatible and is supported by knowledgeable individuals; and
- (4) scheduling ongoing professional development opportunities.

DoDEA's Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center provided a wide range of technical assistance to grantees to remedy these challenges, and 12 of the first-year grantees (including six of the grantees highlighted in this chapter) received individualized technical assistance in year two of their grants to improve data analysis and reporting.

ETAC, with DoDEA's approval, identified the grantees highlighted in Chapter 2 after a thorough review of the grantees' final project reports. ETAC staff reviewed reports for (1) data that demonstrated student achievement outcomes, and (2) evidence of the implementation of multiple integrated strategies. The final selection criterion included students meeting or exceeding all or most of learning targets. The 13 highlighted grantees in Chapter 2 include

- » Academy District 20 (Colorado Springs, CO)
- » Bethel School District (Spanaway, WA)
- » Clarksville Montgomery County Schools (Clarksville, TN)
- » Clover Park School District (Lakewood, WA)
- » Comal Independent School District (New Braunfels, TX)
- » Falcon School District 49 (Peyton, CO)
- » Fort Sam Houston Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)
- » Harford County Public Schools (Bel Air, MD)
- » Hawaii Department of Education (Honolulu, HI)
- » Indian River Central School District (Philadelphia, NY)
- » Judson Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)
- » Northside Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)
- » Waynesville R-VI School District (Waynesville, MO)

Academy District 20 (Colorado Springs, CO)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Academy District 20 (AD20) focused grant efforts on incorporating 21st century instructional strategies and tools into classrooms at 23 targeted schools in order to improve student achievement and reduce dropout rates. The district met all of its student outcome goals. The percent of military-connected students scoring at the “proficient” or “advanced” level on the state standardized test increased by nearly 28 percentage points from 2010 to 2012. District-wide, dropout rates decreased an impressive 67.6 percent by the end of the 2011 school year; military-connected students also made great progress in this area, posting a 24.6 percent decrease.

Subject-Specific Intervention

Online Courses Provide Alternative Routes to Credit Recovery and High School Graduation.

The district developed a program of online courses that eventually progressed into the Academy Online High School, a diploma-granting online school. To support this effort, the district hired a full-time Online Course Development Coordinator responsible for developing, implementing, and coordinating the district’s online school. This Coordinator facilitated a task force of approximately 30 Grade 6-12 teachers who were charged with creating an articulated series of online courses. The task force met each year of the grant program, and received professional development (PD) to support its efforts. A new program, Understanding by Design,³ became the curriculum framework. In addition, Desire to Learn⁴ provided a “Development Wizard” that teachers used to create courses easily and efficiently. The task force also integrated standards for quality online teaching set by the International Association of K-12 Online Learning⁵ when developing the courses. None of the online courses uses a published textbook; teachers developed each course from existing online materials, as well as creating original materials.

AD20 used International Association of K-12 Online Learning standards and semi-randomly assigned teachers to evaluate online courses outside their own content area. Teachers examined five areas of each online course after the course had launched:

- (1) content,
- (2) instructional design,
- (3) course support for students,
- (4) course assessments, and
- (5) use of technology. In addition, teachers received peer-to-peer evaluations with suggestions on how to revise and improve the course. The online courses now include a feature so that students can give direct feedback to teachers, and the feedback component is being expanded this year to improve its function and ease of use.

ACADEMY DISTRICT 20 (Colorado Springs, CO)

Project Title: Increasing Student Achievement, Engagement, and Graduation Rates by Creating 21st Century Learning Teams, Developing Online Course Offerings, and Focused Staff Development

Military Installation Served: Fort Carson, Schriever AFB, Peterson AFB, Falcon AFB, and the U.S. Air Force Academy

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 4,317

Number of Target Schools: 23

Project Focus: K-12 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

³For more information about Understanding by Design, see www.ubdexchange.org

⁴For more information about Desire to Learn, see <http://www.desire2learn.com/>

⁵For more information about iNACOL, see www.inacol.org



The Academy Online High School has benefitted district and out-of-district students and provided important support for highly mobile military-connected students. The district's online school served over 1,000 students during its first four years; 20 percent of these students belonged to military families. AD20 has developed 30 courses; students can now complete their entire high school diploma through this vehicle. Approximately 30 teachers participated each year developing and implementing the online school and received PD on creating virtual classrooms and instruction. All task force teachers helped design online courses but not all of them teach the courses. Additionally, task force teachers found that online strategies have enhanced their classroom teaching.

Teaching Intervention

Implementing 21st Century Instruction Impacts Student Learning and Skill Mastery. A district-wide needs assessment conducted in 2008 showed a significant need for staff development on 21st century skills and tools. The grant supported intensive PD for all teachers in targeted schools on 21st century instructional strategies, including the use of inquiry-based lessons and online activities in the classroom. To effect a change toward 21st century instruction, the district selected 150 teachers to participate in 21st century PD and return to their schools to conduct peer-to-peer PD for their colleagues. About 40 percent of the teachers who developed online courses for the Academy Online High School were also involved in the 21st century initiative. A full-time grant-funded 21st century Learning and Innovation Specialist directed and coordinated the work of these 21st century trainers. As a result, district teachers received 90 hours of PD on 21st century topics during the grant period. The specialist who conducted classroom observations confirmed that teachers increased their use of 21st century techniques and instructional models over the life of the grant by 15 percent, with a noted increase in student-centered vs. curriculum-driven instruction. Teachers self-reported significant increases in their understanding and implementation of 21st century skills, and over 90 percent of teachers reported a positive impact on student motivation as of result of changes in their own instructional techniques.

Through face-to-face workshops and an online community, 21st century PD models the teaching and learning (i.e. inquiry based) strategies that the district expects teachers to use. The PD helped teachers apply 21st century learning practices to lessons. Online topics prompted teachers to create a student-centered environment that features less direct instruction. Some topics included (1) student motivation, (2) inquiry-focused instruction, (3) the democratic classroom, (4) effective questioning, (5) global connections and collaboration, (6) game-based learning in teaching practice, (7) strategies for creativity, and (8) lesson innovation.

Teachers experienced the PD through online platforms, videos, and face-to-face instruction. In the first year, high school students conducted a feedback panel at the conclusion of the PD sessions. The student panel recommended that teachers build rapport and relationships with their students by getting to know them on a personal level and understand their interests and skills. Students also stressed the importance of choice in their lessons and generally reinforced that they would like teachers to use 21st century practices (e.g., group projects that involved inquiry) in the classroom. The student feedback panel was so successful that AD20

"I broadened my understanding of 21st Century skills...and realized there is so much more I can/should be doing to prepare my students for tomorrow."

—Teacher, Academy District 20

added elementary and middle school students to the panel in the remaining years of the grant.

Technology Infusion

Technology Infusion Complements Efforts to Incorporate 21st Century Skills in the Classroom.

The grant enabled purchase of instructional technology to enhance student engagement and support students' use of technology for learning and skill mastery. The technology included iPad tablets for each student in two Grade 7 classrooms in one of the technology strand schools. The district hired two full-time Technology Strand Coordinators to support widespread technology use in AD20's three technology strand schools. The coordinators provide formal and informal PD to teachers and facilitate vertical articulation across school levels.



Student/Parent Support

Families make use of the online high school so that children can continue their education even during orders to relocate. For instance, a student began online courses as a freshman when the family received temporary orders for Germany, and when they returned to the area, this student was able to continue her courses in the building. Another family used the online system to support their student's progress in math while stationed in Guam.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Over time, some students learn how to get through school with minimal effort, and as a result, their level of motivation and engagement drops. Using 21st century instructional strategies, teachers have created an environment that supports student motivation and engagement and has real world connections. The PD has positively impacted student achievement.

Developing a standards-based grading system is the final mission of the task force. Teachers are rethinking how to report student learning as they work with new, enhanced curriculum. Secondary teachers now understand how to use student data to gauge students' status and progress. The 21st century PD supported new skills and knowledge in assessing student learning.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

Based on the success of this grant, the district is incorporating 21st century principles in all PD at all school levels, and grant-funded PD with a 21st century specialist will continue with district funds.

The district offers a tuition-based service for the Academy Online High School to students residing outside of AD20 and to students in AD20 who take more than a full load of courses. Other school districts lease the online courses for a fee. AD20 has an internal process to continue technology funding each year for each school. The Technology Strand Coordinators could continue to be supported by contributions out of the three technology strand schools' funding allotment if the principals decide to pool their funds to continue the two positions. Due to increasing student enrollment, the district expects that the Online Course Development Coordinator position will be fully funded through the Academy Online High School's budget.

The Marzano Research Laboratory also provided on-site grant-funded PD. Teachers responded positively to the PD, and the district now intends to fund additional on-site sessions by Marzano. AD20 is now approaching a critical mass of teachers who use standards-based teaching based on 21st century principles and Understanding by Design.

Bethel School District (Spanaway, WA)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

The Bethel School District grant aimed to strengthen existing intervention programs in mathematics at one middle school and in reading at two elementary schools. Schools participating in grant activities had high poverty rates and a high percentage of students not meeting standards on the state assessment. By the end of the grant period, the percent of students requiring intensive instruction at the two elementary schools dropped from 26 percent to 15 percent, as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS),⁶ a system to screen and monitor students' early literacy and reading progress. Both schools showed consistent improvement over the three year period. In math, more students at the targeted middle school met the proficiency standard on the state math assessment in 2012 than in 2010 by a margin of 13 percentage points, which exceeded the grantee's goal.

BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Spanaway, WA)

Project Title: Increasing Student Achievement Through Response to Intervention

Military Installation Served: Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 325

Number of Target Schools: 3

Project Focus: Grades 7-8 Mathematics and K-8 Reading

Subject-Specific Intervention

Additional Time/Additional Help. To support improved achievement in mathematics at the targeted middle school, the district provided additional instruction to students who needed extra support. The district determined that the principal of each school should serve as the site-based coordinator, as part of the effort to build capacity at both the district and school levels. Using DoDEA funds, the district purchased Orchard Targeted Educational Software⁷ for the middle school math programs. The grant also supported professional development (PD) during the school year and summer to help teachers use the software to provide differentiated instruction using benchmark assessments that align with state standards. DoDEA funds also provided extra support for paraeducators to work more hours.

Intervention Periods for Reading. One key component of the reading program involved carving out intervention periods—times during which teachers offered no new instruction. Students received intensive intervention or enrichment from teachers or paraeducators supported by DoDEA funds during these periods. The intervention occurred four to five days per week for 45 minutes per day. Most students stayed in intensive intervention until they demonstrated long-term skill mastery. Intensive intervention began at each grade level; as students experienced success, the staff regrouped students across grade level or skills.

Teaching Intervention

Filling Gaps in Teacher Knowledge/Skills. To support improved achievement in reading at the two targeted elementary schools, consultants trained teachers on the SRA Reading Mastery⁸ and SRA Corrective Reading⁹ intervention programs. A consultant analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Response to Intervention

⁶For more information on DIBELS, see <https://dibels.org/dibels.html>.

⁷For more information about Orchard software, see <http://www.orchardsoftware.com/>.

⁸For more information about Reading Mastery, see <https://www.mheonline.com/programMHID/view/0076181936>.

⁹For more information about Corrective Reading, see <http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/sra/correctivereading.htm>.

(RtI)¹⁰ program that the district implemented several years ago. The consultant collaborated with the Title 1 teachers to conduct classroom observations and provided technical assistance to teachers to implement RtI with fidelity. After analyzing data from the RtI program, the consultant and Title 1 teachers discovered that paraeducators who often provided instruction for intervention groups did not receive training on the intervention curriculum. Using DoDEA funds, the district provided PD about the intervention curriculum to both the paraeducators and teachers.

The Camas Prairie Elementary School principal believes that using DIBELS to screen and monitor student progress was fundamental to the success of grant outcomes. Individual assessments helped school staff to identify and target students quickly who needed intensive interventions. The progress-monitoring component allowed the staff to observe the rate of student growth and to determine how to modify instruction or interventions. The benchmark testing component provided data about the effectiveness of the reading instructional program. Using the new data, staff conducted data meetings for the entire school. Between the school-wide data meetings, teachers monitored the progress of all students receiving strategic or targeted instruction.

Student/Family Support

Existing student support programs and structures at the Bethel School District provide critical support to their military-connected students. All school counselors received training on Operation Military Kids (OMK), a U.S. Army-sponsored community-based program that supports children impacted by deployment. Additionally, the district has strong existing ties to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, including active Military Affairs Teams and military liaisons at each district school.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

The key to the project's success was building school-level capacity so that new processes could continue after DoDEA funding ended. At Camas Prairie Elementary, the consultant and Title 1 teacher collaborated closely on new instructional models and collecting appropriate data. The Title 1 teacher, in turn, worked with all teachers and paraeducators to build both teaching skills and knowledge about how to use data to plan and modify instruction. Leaders found that communication between intervention teachers and regular school day teachers is crucial in order to coordinate classroom teaching and supplemental instruction, and thus, impact student achievement. Making the after-school sessions a requirement for targeted students affected mathematics achievement at the middle school. Previously, the school asked students to volunteer to attend the afternoon program. Once attendance became mandatory, the number of students who met the mathematics proficiency standard increased.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The district used DoDEA funds as seed money to develop the skills of teachers and paraeducators and to institutionalize monitoring systems and programs such as SRA. Aided by the targeted capacity-building efforts at the school and the reflections of the school staff throughout the three-year grant period, the school built a solid foundation for future student achievement gains in mathematics and reading. Teachers have also begun integrating reading intervention strategies into other core subject areas.

"My student receives the challenge he needs to move forward because having this grant available allows for consistent small group instruction at an earlier stage in education. More importantly, there is not just one person working to help him—there is a whole team helping him. This strategy carries over to all the students, no matter what their academic level."

—Parent, Bethel School District

¹⁰For more information about Response to Intervention, see <http://www.rti4success.org/>.

Clarksville Montgomery County Schools (Clarksville, TN)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Clarksville Montgomery County Schools' Project, Eagles Wings, featured a combination of mathematics and reading intervention programs, professional development (PD), and transition support programs designed to impact student achievement at 28 of 36 schools across the district. Other agencies provided funding to implement the program at the remaining eight schools, so that all schools received math and reading intervention and transition programs with PD support. The DoDEA schools improved achievement in both reading and mathematics on the state assessment by the end of the grant period. In reading, 87 percent of targeted elementary schools achieved an above average or exemplary rating (exceeding the district goal); the middle and high schools also made positive progress with 50 percent of middle schools and 65 percent of high schools scoring above average. In mathematics, by the final grant year, 94 percent of elementary schools and 100 percent of middle schools achieved above average or exemplary ratings, exceeding the grantee's mathematics achievement goal. Targeted high schools also made progress, with 56 percent of schools at either the above average or exemplary levels. Elementary schools posted the greatest level of achievement growth over the course of the grant, with over half of elementary schools improving their achievement status (e.g., average, above average, exemplary). All (100 percent) of the military-connected students participating in the grant-supported credit and grade recovery program completed it, and the district's military-connected students garnered an 11.8 percent increase in graduation rates (to 98.4 percent) by the final grant year. Additionally, attendance increased and suspension and expulsions decreased at the targeted schools during the grant period.

CLARKSVILLE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS (Clarksville, TN)

Project Title: Project Eagles Wings

Military Installation Served: Fort Campbell

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 6,444

Number of Target Schools: 28

Project Focus: K-12 Reading, Mathematics, and Increased Graduation Rate

"This is not work for the faint of heart. It took the full three years to build and that was with many of the pieces already in place. The grant allowed us to grow and successfully implement initiatives already begun. It doesn't work on Day 1 and even on the last day there is still building and growing."

—Grantee Interview, February 2013

Subject-Specific Intervention

Mathematics and Reading Intervention Programs and Credit/Grade Recovery Activities Help Struggling Students Find Success.

To support student achievement in mathematics and reading, the project implemented new intervention programs to assist at-risk and low-performing students at all school levels in a four-tiered intervention system. Tier 1 involved 90 minutes of daily core essentials of reading taught in whole and small groups and centers, and included a period of silent sustained reading for

all students. Principals rearranged their master schedules and teachers learned and used differentiated instructional strategies as schools implemented the 90-minute instructional period. Teachers received PD in Marzano's instructional design framework using graphic organizers and other reading supports that addressed students' skill gaps. Tier 2 provided 45 to 60 minutes of published interventions (e.g., READ 180, Compass Learning, Language!) to students who were one or two years behind; students received the assistance before, during, or after school. (Students received Tier 2 assistance in addition to the Tier 1 90 minutes). Originally, students participated in Tier 3 before, during, or after school; this strategy included

60-minute sessions using published interventions (above and beyond the Tier 1 lessons) for special education students and English language learners. However, the district soon realized the need for an additional tier to capture non-identified students who still needed more support beyond Tier 2. New intervention programs included Compass Learning,¹¹ READ 180,¹² Language!,¹³ READ WELL,¹⁴ Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LIPS),¹⁵ and Carnegie Learning Intervention.¹⁶ These various programs became part of an intervention curriculum targeted to student need.

“The DoDEA grant award positively influenced students’ academic achievement and contributed to improved teacher effectiveness.”

—Grantee Final Report, October 2012

Schools offered credit and grade recovery before, during (i.e., study hall period), or after school, and on evenings, weekends, and holidays to students at the targeted high schools via the district’s Virtual Program. Participating students received online instruction via the A+ Learning System¹⁷ in a district classroom supported by teachers or tutors. The Virtual Program served 727 students, including 151 military-connected students, during the grant period.

Teaching Intervention

Multi-faceted Professional Development Provides Teachers with the Tools Needed for Effective Instruction. Multi-faceted grant-supported PD included (1) seven just-in-time trainings targeted to the needs of high school teachers; these featured PD on the project’s mathematics and reading intervention programs and the online instruction program; (2) Professional Learning Community (PLC) trainings on topics including effective instruction, best practices in the classroom, and use of assessment to inform instruction; (3) district-led PD using a train-the trainer format on topics including common core and alignment to state standards, differentiated instruction, effective instructional strategies, and data interpretation for classroom learning; (4) attendance at state and national conferences and trainings; and (5) a cadre of academic coaches (one in every elementary and middle school), consulting teachers (for math, intervention reading, English, science, social studies, and humanities content), and mentors working with new or struggling teachers or teachers teaching a new course. Coaches, consulting teachers, and mentors supported teachers individually and in small groups. They modeled lessons, developed classroom activities, and observed classroom instruction to provide feedback on instructional practice. Clarksville Montgomery’s PD calendar requires its educators to engage in opportunities from 28 to 63 hours per year. DoDEA-involved educators averaged 25 to 30 hours beyond this requirement.

Student/Family Support

To support the important transition from elementary to middle school and ensure students’ academic success, the grant-supported PATHWAYS program offers reading and math support along with orientation to middle school for Grade 5 students identified as struggling (e.g., poor grades, poor attendance, involved in the juvenile justice system). Once identified, the students receive reading and math support through summer programming. During the summer program, the Grade 5 students meet at the middle school they will attend in the fall. The program includes an orientation to middle school (e.g., learning the layout of the school and getting their lockers early), and pairs each Grade 5 student with a middle school “buddy.” A counselor checks

¹¹ For more information about Compass Learning, see www.compasslearning.com.

¹² For more information about READ 180, see <http://read180.scholastic.com>.

¹³ For more information about Language!, see www.voyagerlearning.com.

¹⁴ For more information about READ WELL, see www.voyagerlearning.com.

¹⁵ For more information about LIPS, see <http://www.lindamoodbell.com>.

¹⁶ For more information about Carnegie Learning Interventions, see www.carnegielearning.com.

¹⁷ For more information about A+ Learning System, see www.amered.com.

with the student every nine weeks to discuss grades, the need for grade recovery, and general comfort level. Usually by Grade 8, students are functioning well. PATHWAYS was implemented mirroring the design of the district's successful Bridges Transition Program for Grade 8 students. There were 25 Grade 8 students in each of seven middle schools involved in the Bridges program. However, the PATHWAYS program has been so successful that none of the PATHWAYS students became members of the Bridges program. Programs at the high school level also provide important transition support for at-risk and low-performing freshmen. These projects (Bridges Transition Program, Freshman Focus, and Freshman Academies) permit high school students to continue to learn despite low skill levels or gaps in their transcripts due to mobility issues. For example, Grade 9 students who had failed the first nine weeks of a class could sign up for the class online while continuing to take the face-to-face class in order to recover the grade and still pass the class.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

The grant provided the time and resources needed to implement an effective ongoing PD effort. It takes time to learn new interventions and new instructional methods, and to implement these with fidelity. Grant-supported professional development was critical to project success.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

Districts institutionalized some components such as the four-tiered intervention system. Other components will be supported with Title 1 funds. The Bridges program will be sustained through a state lottery/education grant.



Clover Park School District (Lakewood, WA)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Clover Park School District used DoDEA funds to expand an existing comprehensive assessment system and provide additional reading and mathematics instruction to low-performing students. Grant activities took place at 15 K-12 schools with high populations of military-connected students. Student achievement improved in reading and mathematics at all school levels. In Grade 4 reading, the district closed its achievement gap with overall student performance in the state by over half in 2012, with one targeted elementary school posting an impressive 25 point percentage increase in the number of students meeting the standard level on the state assessment; Grade 7 reading scores increased 10.4 percentage points. The district made significant improvements in mathematics, with Grades 4 and 10 posting 16.9 and 20.4 percentage point increases in students meeting the standard on the state assessment. The targeted high school posted a gain of 24.5 percentage points on the passing rate on the end-of-course geometry assessment in the final grant year. In both reading and mathematics, military-connected students demonstrated improved proficiency on the state assessment over the life of the grant.

CLOVER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT (Lakewood, WA)

Project Title: DoDEA Promoting Student Achievement

Military Installation Served: Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 4,710

Number of Target Schools: 15

Project Focus: Grades K-12 Reading and Mathematics

“The grant allowed the district to build a sustainable and transparent comprehensive assessment system which includes formative, common, interim, and summative student assessments.”

—Project Evaluator, October 2012

Subject-Specific Intervention

A Comprehensive Assessment System Identifies Students Needing Additional Mathematics and Reading Instruction.

The grant supported expanding Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)¹⁸ to Grades 3-5, following the earlier successful implementation of the program in Grades 6-9. MAP is a state standard-aligned computerized adaptive assessment system. Students are assessed three times per year. Administrators and teachers use

MAP data to identify and remedy lesson plan weaknesses and to identify low-performing students who need additional instruction. Teachers received professional development (PD) on MAP principles and how to effectively utilize MAP results. With grant support, the district also hired a programmer to develop an online user-friendly “data dashboard” to provide teachers with timely access to students’ MAP achievement data. Teachers received time during the school day to review assessment data and to modify lessons plans using the data. The MAP program helped participating schools implement a student-centered strategy to address improved achievement. For example, at one middle school, teachers, families, and students used MAP data to set individual student achievement goals. Students who met their individual goal received a ticket for a school-wide drawing to win an Xbox gaming system. This contest spurred a school-wide focus on student achievement growth and an enhanced culture of learning. Names of students who met their goal were posted on classroom doors. Students were intensely focused on improving their performance, and improved achievement was a major ongoing topic of discussion among students and teachers. The grant also supported additional instruction for low-performing elementary students after school, at Saturday workshops, and summer school. Students received hands-on learning experiences to strengthen

¹⁸ For more information about MAP, see www.nwea.org/products-services-0.

mathematics and reading skills. A grant-supported teacher at each of the 11 targeted elementary schools coordinated the additional instructional activities.

Technology Infusion

Intensive Professional Development Forged Strong Connections between Technology and Curriculum.

With grant support, the district provided computers and instructional technology in the targeted schools. To support the overarching effort to implement a comprehensive system of computer-based assessments, the district purchased and deployed over 500 computers (including mobile “computers on wheels”) in district classrooms. In addition, grant funds helped to purchase TI-Nspire¹⁹ handheld calculators with networking capability at the secondary level to support mathematics achievement.²⁰

Teachers received extensive PD on using technology to align mathematics instructional strategies to the curriculum, and to integrate instruction with the MAP comprehensive assessment system. All teachers received PD at the same time in the same setting, resulting in a team-building event that promoted project buy-in and a common understanding of project goals and objectives. Each teacher received an estimated 20 days of PD over the course of the grant, and several teachers received train-the-trainer instruction to support the sustainability of the grant’s PD component. To supplement the classroom training events, the district also offered additional training via webinars, and district teachers accessed over 700 of the training sessions. One teacher from each school served as the on-site coordinator and training facilitator for the TI calculators, and these individuals received specialized training from Texas Instruments to facilitate that role. Three teachers received train-the-trainer instruction (and national certification from TI) that will facilitate sustainability of this training. Project leaders believe that the grant-supported PD program was a critical component that helped integrate all grant activities.

Student/Family Support

The district offers family-focused events throughout the year to engage families in their children’s mathematics education, and the district is seeking ways to encourage more participation in these events. The schools conduct math-focused events in the evening and on Saturdays to provide families the opportunity to see what the children learn and to teach families math games to play with their children at home.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Leaders and teachers conclude that technology infusion must be accompanied by intensive PD that is customized to the curriculum. For long-term successful implementation of the technology, the PD plan must also focus on sustainability. Train-the-trainer strategies are a cost-effective method to ensure that ongoing PD is available beyond the grant period.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The grant supported project implementation at 15 targeted schools; simultaneously, the district funded the same activities at all remaining district schools. All district schools now use the MAP-based comprehensive assessment system developed with grant support; the system is self-sustaining. The grant-funded PD plan addresses sustainability by providing train-the-trainer PD to multiple teachers, which will allow for future implementation of the plan without the need for additional funding. The district will also continue to fund extended day mathematics and reading instruction at the elementary schools.

¹⁹ For more information about TI-Nspire handheld calculators, see <http://education.ti.com/en/us/nspire-family/cx-handhelds>.

²⁰ Detailed information about the grantee’s implementation of TI-Nspire handheld calculators is described in a 2012 DoDEA publication, Strategy Boosters Lessons Learned from DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants (www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/docs/2012_StrategyBoosters.pdf).

Comal Independent School District (New Braunfels, TX)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Comal Independent School District geared its project to assist high numbers of military-connected students at one elementary and one high school. Building-level needs assessments identified the targeted interventions, which included new reading intervention programs, professional development (PD) geared to assist highly mobile students, and online courses to help students meet graduation requirements. At both the elementary and high school levels, the grantee exceeded student achievement targets in reading on the state assessment in each year of the grant for both at-risk and military-connected sub-groups of students. At-risk students at the high school level increased their passing rates by nearly 10 percentage points to 94 percent in year three of the grant, with military-connected students demonstrating an impressive 20 percentage point increase. Graduation rates also improved over the course of the grant for both at-risk students (to 98 percent) and military-connected students (to 99 percent) in the grant's final year.

COMAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (New Braunfels, TX)

Project Title: Ensuring Academic Success in a Mobile Society

Military Installation Served: Joint Base San Antonio

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 253

Number of Target Schools: 2

Project Focus: Elementary Reading and Improved High School Graduation Rates

Subject-Specific Intervention

Research-Based Intervention Programs Implemented at the Targeted Schools Help Students Succeed in Reading/ELA.

At the elementary level, the grant purchased leveled readers in Spanish and English for grades K-2 to supplement the district's Dual Language Program. For Grades 3-5, teachers used leveled readers to build reading skills while integrating content area skills in science and social studies. The grant also supported a new research-based phonics program, Sing, Spell, Read, and Write²¹ for Grades K-2, as a

"The DoDEA grant activities complemented a campus initiative to improve reading levels. The grant allowed Comal to go in-depth by providing needed library materials, PD that targeted reading at grade levels, PD for counselors and intervention specialists who worked with small groups of students, and Lead Your School training for the new high school principal."

—Grantee Interview, 2013

supplement to the existing reading curriculum. At the high school level, one grant-supported reading intervention teacher provided over 1,000 hours of reading/ELA instruction to 472 students over the life of the grant via reading elective classes and individual and small group pullouts. The elective reading course used READ 180,²² a research-based reading intervention program that leverages adaptive technology to individualize instruction for students reading two or more years below grade level. During the grant period, 29 elementary and 50 high school teachers also received PD on Thinking Maps²³ that helped students think, read, and communicate effectively, as well as PD on developing reading skills for each grade level.

²¹ For more information about Sing, Spell, Read, and Write, see <http://www.pearsonschool.com/>.

²² For more information about READ 180, see <http://read180.scholastic.com/>.

²³ For more information about Thinking Maps, see www.designsforthinking.com.

Flexible Online Courses Provide Alternatives for Struggling Students to Complete Coursework and Graduate On Time. High school students benefitted as they used Education 20/20,²⁴ an online program of core and elective instruction, to recover credits and complete coursework. During the grant period, 927 students accessed the online course system and 821 students recovered and accrued credits for graduation. Students who had failed courses or were missing courses from their transcript used these services. The online program allowed students to participate during the day if their schedule of classes permitted, or they could take courses during non-school hours.

“The credit recovery and reading interventions increased the number of students, over time, ready to graduate and meet high school standards. These two programs reduced the number of students needing to make up credits because the students’ reading skills had improved.”

—Grantee Interview, 2013

Teaching Intervention

Professional Development Enhances Teachers’ Reading Instruction. To further support improved student achievement in reading/ELA, 29 elementary and 50 high school teachers participated in Integrating Reading Across the Curriculum during the grant period. Designs for Thinking²⁵ conducted a three-day summer training, with follow-up training and coaching during the year. The district also used a train-the-trainer model to disseminate the strategies to other elementary campuses district wide. Currently, all dual language schools in the district are using these strategies.

Technology Infusion

The grant provided 20 Apple laptop computers for the high school’s READ 180 intervention program and the online course initiative. These computers were set up on a mobile cart (computer on wheels or COWs) and were available for student and teachers to use in the classroom and for online courses. The district’s Information Technology Department contributed funds to set up and provide additional COWs.

Student/Family Support

Each year, the local military coalition provided train-the-trainer instruction to members of the grantee’s leadership team on how to engage and assist highly mobile students. The leadership team members then trained teachers and staff who work directly with highly mobile students. For instance, at the high school level, the reading intervention teacher received 29 hours of training each year on how to engage and assist highly mobile students, and then provided a total of nine PD sessions over the course of the grant to teachers and department leaders at the school. In addition, the reading intervention teachers served as the point of contact for new students and built time into their daily schedule to assist these students. The project also enabled leaders to purchase and disseminate motivational and recruiting materials for ROTC. The number of students participating in ROTC increased in every year of the grant, with an impressive 211 percent increase in military-connected student participation by the final year of the grant.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Staff participating in the project noted the importance of collaborative meetings between campuses to permit teachers to learn from each other’s experiences. The grantee also recommends that other districts focus not only on academic achievement but also on the social and emotional challenges of military-connected students who are affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. Because DoDEA required

²⁴ For more information about Education 20/20, see www.education2020.com.

²⁵ For more information, see <http://dft.designsforthinking.com/>.

the district to collect military-connected student data, the district discovered that most of their military students were affiliated with the National Guard and Reserve forces. These families do not have the typical group support that regular Army, Navy, and Marine families have during periods of deployment, and are thus likely underserved during this critical time. This new understanding propelled the district to apply for a grant to provide counseling and other support to these families.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The district has committed to continuing all of the grant activities described above. The district will combine Title I and its own funds to provide continued professional development, new reading materials, and support for the reading intervention teacher to train new staff and continue the programs initiated by the DoDEA grant.



Falcon School District 49 (Peyton, CO)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Falcon School District 49 used grant funds to develop and implement Project AIM to increase math achievement at six district schools—two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. Each school’s military-connected population ranges from 19 to 58 percent.

The grant provided mathematics intervention programs supplemented by instructional technology. Prior to the grant period, nearly half of the students scored at the unsatisfactory or partially proficient levels on the state mathematics assessment. By the end of the grant, 33 percent of targeted students improved their mathematics performance on the state assessment and moved into the next achievement category (e.g., from unsatisfactory to proficient). Targeted students performed better on the state assessment than district students who did not receive grant-funded assistance. Targeted military-connected students demonstrated statistically significant improvement on the state assessment in years two and three of the grant period. Moreover, before the grant period, the two targeted elementary schools had the lowest math achievement in the district; when the grant ended, these same two schools ranked the highest in the district in mathematics achievement.

FALCON SCHOOL DISTRICT 49 (Peyton, CO)

Project Title: Project AIM: Achievement in Math for Low-Achieving Military and Civilian Students

Military Installations Served: Fort Carson

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 1,715

Number of Target Schools: 6

Project Focus: K-12 Mathematics

Subject-Specific Intervention

“I feel like I am a better math teacher because of Project AIM.”

—District Teacher, December 2012

Intensive Mathematics Tutoring Provided to Low-Performing Students During and After the School Day.

The DoDEA grant supported math intervention teachers for all six schools. Mathematics teachers at the middle and high schools received a stipend to serve as math intervention teachers during their

planning times; the district hired two full-time math interventionists for the elementary schools. All math intervention teachers either co-taught with the classroom teacher or worked with small groups of low-performing students in mathematics classrooms. This arrangement benefitted all mathematics students at the targeted schools; low-performing students received customized assistance in a small group, and the remaining students benefited from a minimized student/teacher ratio. All targeted elementary schools offered a Math Club to provide mathematics tutoring before and after the regular school day. In addition to before and after school support, middle and high schools offered extra support to their students on Saturdays. Intervention teachers combined traditional instruction with learner-centered, computer-assisted mathematics intervention programs, including Eduss Learning²⁶ and SuccessMaker.²⁷

Rigorous Teaching Interventions Support Improved Mathematics Achievement. In addition to co-teaching in mathematics classrooms at all targeted schools, the district also provided intensive professional development (PD) to math teachers. At the elementary level, the two full-time math interventionists (one at each elementary school) co-taught math classes once or twice a week, modeled instructional strategies, and provided PD at the building level. At the middle schools, intervention occurred in three to five classes every

²⁶ For more information about Eduss Learning, see www.eduss.com.

²⁷ For more information about SuccessMaker, see www.pearsonschool.com/.

"...students' grasp of math facts, number sense, and math concepts... seemed to improve significantly among those who attended tutoring."

—Grantee Final Report, December 2012

class period, and the high school intervention took place in two to three classes each class period. In addition, each elementary school established a "math cadre" to provide peer-to-peer PD at the building level and reinforce that training throughout the school year.

The targeted middle and high schools each had a grant liaison who helped identify the type of intervention, technology, PD, and resources that the mathematics teachers needed. Grant-supported PD focused on effective co-teaching, improving teachers' mathematics content knowledge, and providing innovative instructional strategies. Participating teachers rated the PD highly, including the Developing Mathematical Ideas summer institute,²⁸ Creative Mathematics,²⁹ and Kagan math workshops.³⁰

Technology Infusion

Instructional Technology Strengthens Mathematics Intervention Activities. The grant supported several types of new instructional technology including SMART boards³¹ and TI-Nspire calculators³² in all middle and high school mathematics classes. Additionally, the middle and high schools used Navigator³³ math intervention materials to provide supplemental online math support. Building administrators conducting classroom observations revealed that by the end of the grant period, teachers used instructional technology 90 percent of the time in elementary math classrooms, 88 percent of the time at the middle school level, and 96 percent of the time at the high school level.

"Compared to a standard white board, students appear more willing to focus on material on the SMART Board. Moreover, they enjoy working at the board, often competing for the opportunity to show their work or complete a problem."

—Grantee Final Report, December 2012

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Teachers noted that co-teaching strategies should incorporate ample planning time for participating teachers. Teachers also reported that successful use of instructional technology requires building-level technical support, implementation modeling, and PD by knowledgeable staff. Grant coordinators believed that job-embedded PD (modeling lessons using the technology in the classroom) was more effective than PD sessions. Leaders and teachers recommend that technology should be introduced incrementally. Teachers and IT support groups need sufficient time to integrate it into the curriculum and ensure that all equipment functions correctly. Many teachers became discouraged when they did not understand how to use the netbooks and other technology or when equipment was not functioning properly.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The district will continue to provide mathematics support to low-performing students before, during, and after school using Eduss and SuccessMaker, and the district will pay for the math intervention teachers to support these activities. The middle and high schools will continue to purchase Navigator and other supplemental curriculum workbooks as needed. The high schools will also provide additional training on integrating SMART Boards into the curriculum. In addition, teachers will continue to attend national mathematics conferences and math interventionists will continue to teach Mathematical Ideas courses.

²⁸ For more information about DMI, see www.pearsonschool.com.

²⁹ For more information about Creative Mathematics, see www.creativemathematics.com.

³⁰ For more information about Kagan workshops, see www.kaganonline.com.

³¹ For more information about SMART Boards, see www.smarttech.com/smartboard.

³² For more information about TI-Nspire calculators see <http://education.ti.com/calculators/products/US/Nspire-Family/CX-Handhelds>.

³³ For more information about Navigator Math materials see <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZu69>.

Fort Sam Houston Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

The Fort Sam Houston Independent School District focused DoDEA grant activities on the district's one elementary school and one combination middle/high school to enhance student engagement and improve achievement in mathematics and science. At the high school level, the grant enabled the district to infuse new technology infusion into the classrooms. In 2012, 85 percent of district students passed the state mathematics assessment and 87 percent passed the state science assessment, thus meeting the target outcome for both subjects. Examining the achievement results by grade level shows that in 2012, for mathematics, five of nine grade levels exceeded the target—an 85 percent pass rate on the state assessment. In science, three of five grade levels exceeded the intended target.

Subject-Specific and Teaching Intervention

Transforming the Learning Environment Enhances

Student Engagement and Impacts Student Achievement. The grant supported intensive school-wide professional development (PD) to transform the learning environment from one focused on student compliance to an environment characterized by student engagement. To accomplish this transformation, the grantee employed the Schlechty Center³⁴ to provide on-site and off-site PD to develop strategies to increase student engagement and transform teacher instruction. The Schlechty Center provided the district with the framework for transformation; district teachers and administrators then used the framework to implement specific strategies. Using the framework, the project staff developed a mission statement and specific goals and objectives for the grant, implemented professional learning communities (PLCs), created a comprehensive PD plan, and integrated all grant activities. Teachers attended at least one three-day Schlechty Center conference, and then received follow-up training from the Schlechty Center and the grant-funded instructional coaches.

Instructional Coaches Provide Additional Support to Mathematics and Science Teachers. The grant funded two full-time instructional coaches trained by the Schlechty Center, who provided PD to teachers during and after the grant period on transformation strategies (e.g., using assessment data to inform instruction) and on mathematics and science content. The coaches provided PD directly to teachers at the building- and grade-levels and provided ad hoc assistance to teachers. The coaches led the mathematics and science PLCs, and teachers participated in PLC activities three days per week for 40 minutes per day for approximately 35 weeks. The coaches also led "learning walks" at the building level that provided teachers with opportunities to observe successful instruction that incorporated the principles based on the Schlechty Center's classroom transformation framework. Data collected from the learning walks and student/teacher surveys indicated increasing levels of student engagement over time in the district's mathematics and science classrooms.

FORT SAM HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (San Antonio, TX)

Project Title: Transforming Fort Sam Houston Schools to Engage Students and Ensure Success

Military Installation Served: Fort Sam Houston, Camp Bullis, and Joint Base San Antonio

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 1,505

Number of Target Schools: 2

Project Focus: Grades 3-11 Mathematics and Grades 5, 8, 10, & 11 Science

³⁴ For more information about the Schlechty Center, see www.slechtycenter.org.

Technology Infusion

Laptop Initiative Transforms Instruction and Engages High School Students. As part of the overall transformation of teaching and student learning, the district purchased over 400 Dell notebook computers for high school students. The notebook computers complemented the existing curriculum in all content areas. The notebook computers also facilitated the flipped classroom model, in which students watch instructional videos online outside of the classroom, allowing class time to be spent practicing new skills and knowledge. This instructional model further transformed instruction throughout the district; the teachers' role changed from "presenter of content" to "learning coach." A technology skills survey administered to students at the conclusion of the grant period indicated increased proficiency in four of the six tested technology skill domains. In addition, 83 percent of students noted that school work was more engaging when using the computers.

A Variety of PD Models Support Teachers' Use of Technology in the Classroom. To support the Laptop Initiative, the district provided teachers with a wide variety of PD and resources that included open house technology sessions during and after school (e.g., "Wired Wednesdays"), student technology interns, traditional classroom PD, mini-training sessions, and recorded video tutorials. The instructional coaches worked closely with the district's information technology coordinator to integrate the computers into other PD activities. Teachers reported that having a variety of PD models was one of the most helpful project components.

Student Support

The district had a strong existing family support structure, and grant-funded efforts to transform instruction provided further support by establishing a student-centered learning environment. The project encouraged student input and made students true stakeholders in their own education. The district now holds annual teacher/student panels in which students provide teachers with feedback on lessons and instructional strategies. From these panels, teachers get a sense of what works and what does not work from the perspective of the student; in turn, students are given a voice in an environment where they are traditionally excluded from the decision-making process.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Efforts to transform the learning environment required commitment and buy-in from all school personnel, including teachers, administrators, and other staff. For example, an upcoming district-wide PD event will include all school personnel for at least part of the event. This attendance requirement promotes building-wide engagement in the transformation effort. To garner support for transformation, districts must create a risk-free environment for teachers to successfully transform their work in the classroom.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

Teachers in the district have transformed their teaching as they use new instructional models and integrate technology into their lessons. The district will continue funding for PD for mathematics and science teachers and for the two instructional coaches. The Laptop Initiative proved so successful that the district sought and secured additional DoDEA funding to purchase additional laptop computers for students and staff.

"Being able to receive information in both synchronous environments (e.g., face-to-face drop-in sessions) and asynchronous environments (e.g., pre-recorded tutorials) afforded teachers multiple methods to gather information and increase their technological competencies."

—Grantee Final Report, October 2012

Harford County Public Schools (Bel Air, MD)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Harford County Public Schools used DoDEA grant funding to implement research-based mathematics and reading intervention programs at one elementary school, both during and after school. The grant also supported professional development (PD) to help teachers improve mathematics pedagogy. For the 2011-12 school year, students at the targeted school demonstrated increased proficiency on the Scholastic Mathematics Inventory (SMI), administered multiple times throughout the school year. Students exceeded achievement targets in mathematics, with Grade 2-5 military-connected students posting a 13 percentage point gain on the SMI. Military-connected students participating in three of the four intervention programs posted statistically significant increases in their scale scores. In reading, students posted statistically significant increases in scale scores for both of the grant-funded reading intervention programs. When compared to baseline data, there was a 15 percentage point increase in students' scores at the proficient or advanced level on the reading portion of the SMI.

HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Bel Air, MD)

Project Title: Eagles AIM (Achievement through Intervention for Military Students)

Military Installation Served: Aberdeen Proving Ground

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 262

Number of Target Schools: 1

Project Focus: K-6 Mathematics and Reading

Subject-Specific Intervention

"It is imperative that intensive individualized services be provided to increase military student academic performance in both reading and mathematics... The children of our soldiers deserve this attention as they themselves sacrifice much-needed family time in the service of our country."

—Parent and Substitute Teacher,
May 2009

New Intervention Programs and Extra Instruction Help Low-Performing Students Succeed. The district needs assessment found that nearly half of military-connected students performed below the proficient level on the Maryland state mathematics and reading assessments. To combat the problem, the district formed an intervention committee that includes the mathematics and reading supervisors, executive directors of elementary, middle, and high schools, accountability supervisors, and teachers. The committee screens all proposed interventions to determine if they are evidence-based and will meet the intended goals. Each school can pick from a menu of interventions that are grade-specific and that meet the students' needs as described by Performance Matters.³⁵ To monitor fidelity of implementation, the intervention coordinator makes monthly visits to the schools.

The DoDEA grant supported new research-based intervention programs during and after school at the targeted elementary school. The district implemented two new mathematics programs during the regular school day: DreamBox Learning³⁶ and First in Math.³⁷ From their home computers, 280 students used First in Math, an online intervention program. The school also received two after-school mathematics intervention

³⁵ For more information about Performance Matters see www9.performancematters.com.

³⁶ For more information about DreamBox programs, see www.dreambox.com.

³⁷ For more information about First in Math, see www.firstinmath.com.

programs: DreamBox Afterschool and Do the Math.³⁸ For reading, the school selected the Soar to Success³⁹ program for the regular school day and the ReadAbout⁴⁰ program for the after-school program. An analysis of students' performance data determined which students participated in the intervention programs. (Only Grades 3-5 students participated since the after-school programs result in a long day.) DoDEA funds supported seven teachers and one instructional assistant to teach in the after-school program, which served over 60 students. Students participated in the after-school program for 20 weeks each grant year, three times per week for three-hour sessions. DoDEA funds also helped defray the cost of after-school bus transportation. Students participated in sustained reading, attended intensive reading and math small group sessions, or worked on math and reading lessons on the computer (supervised by an instructional assistant) during the regular school day intervention program, conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. When needed, other school specialists (e.g., PE instructors, music teachers, guidance counselors) covered classrooms to allow teachers to work with the small groups.

Teaching Intervention

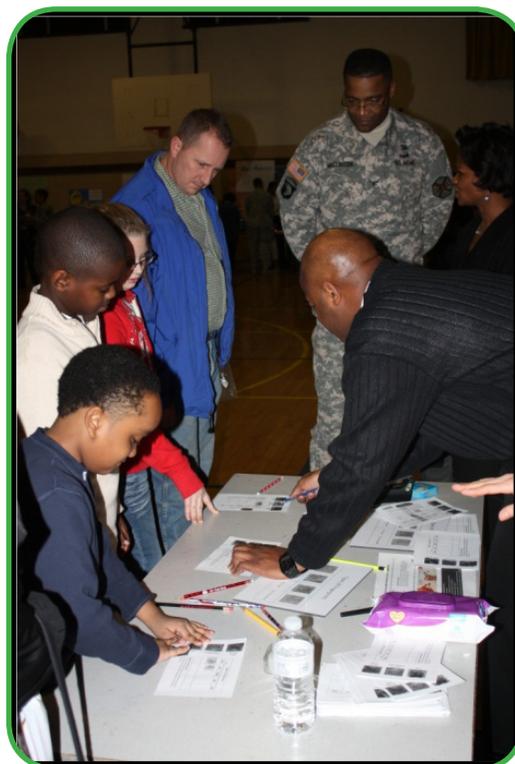
Intensive Professional Development Helps Teachers Implement the New Intervention Programs with Fidelity.

During each grant year, teachers received state-of-the-art PD on mathematics and reading pedagogy, as well as training on the new intervention programs described above. Additionally, the school administrators devoted faculty meeting time to PD. Most teachers also participated in technology-focused PD during the summer months; teachers received a stipend from the DoDEA grant and the school arranged for babysitting. The teachers also attended two additional follow-up technology sessions of approximately two hours each.

Technology Infusion

Videotaped Lessons Provide Feedback to Teachers About Student Engagement and Learning.

Coaches videotaped selected lessons to allow teachers to monitor and learn from student reaction to the grant-supported mathematics and reading intervention programs. The district arranged for class coverage so that teachers could observe lessons in real time while the videotaping took place. Teachers then reviewed and analyzed the videotapes. Additionally, the DoDEA grant helped to supply all classrooms with SMARTboards and document cameras. Teachers have asked for more frequent PD or coaching to integrate the technology into their lessons.



Student/Family Support

Each quarter, teachers conduct parent meetings to review student progress and to facilitate families' connection with the school and teachers. Additionally, families and students joined a LEGO league and participated in competitions within the school district. The district also sponsored a STEM family night in which families participated in multiple inquiry-based activities.

³⁸ For more information about Do the Math, see www.teacher.scholastic.com/products/dothemath.

³⁹ For more information about Soar to Success, see www.hmhschool.com.

⁴⁰ For more information about ReadAbout, see www.teacher.scholastic.com/products/readabout.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Project staff suggest that new technology should be introduced incrementally and with flexibility. To ensure consistent and continuous use of the technology, staff recommend routine (e.g., monthly) PD on technology integration in conjunction with pedagogy and curriculum. Additionally, staff noted that the project manager should be knowledgeable about use of the technology and curriculum integration so that he/she can serve as a resource for teachers. To measure implementation fidelity, staff used a formative assessment tool—SMI Math⁴¹—to track student progress three times per year, and also held monthly meetings with the school principal to determine the extent to which intervention implementation occurred.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

As a result of the grant, the district's student information management system flags all military-connected students. This helps track the progress and outcomes of military-connected students. Additionally, teachers became very proficient at using SMI to track the students' progress in mathematics. The district has implemented the program in all district elementary schools.



⁴¹To learn more about SMI <http://teacher.scholastic.com/math-assessment/scholastic-math-inventory>.

Hawaii Department of Education (Honolulu, HI)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

The Hawaii Department of Education used DoDEA grant funds to design programs and strategies to impact student achievement in science. Key components included professional development (PD) for teachers and enrichment activities for students at 10 K-12 schools in the Leilehua Complex on the island of Oahu. The project's goal was to increase targeted student scores at the proficient or above level by two percentage points on the state science assessment. The districts exceeded the goal for all students (a three-point increase), elementary military-connected students (a nine-point increase), and middle school military-connected students (an eight-point increase). The project showed statistically significant student improvement on the science assessment for those students whose teachers attended grant-supported PD, compared to students whose teachers did not participate.

HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (Honolulu, HI)

Project Title: Thinking Through Science: Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning

Military Installation Served: Schofield Barracks, Wheeler Airfield, and Wahiawa Naval Station

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 4,276

Number of Target Schools: 10

Project Focus: K-12 Science

Subject-Specific Intervention

Enrichment Activities Engage Students' Interest in Science. The grant provided support to expand the district's robotics enrichment program from the middle and high schools into each elementary school. Using DoDEA funds, the district purchased Robotics kits⁴² for participating elementary students who presented their final projects at the district's annual robotics competition. The annual robotics competition is a major district event that draws over 500 attendees and includes students from every school level.

Teaching Intervention

Instructional Coaches Transform Science Teaching and Learning District-Wide. Two full-time grant-supported instructional coaches provided key support to science teachers district-wide and played an important role in integrating grant activities. The coaches were highly knowledgeable about state science standards, and provided intensive PD on inquiry-based instruction and STEM content to 406 teachers and 12 administrators over the course of the grant. The PD consisted of district-level and building-level workshops that focused heavily on physical science, previously the district's weakest achievement area on the state assessment. At the workshops, teachers conducted scientific investigations, practiced their scientific inquiry skills, and learned about the state's science achievement benchmarks. The coaches also modeled lessons for teachers and provided ad hoc assistance, by request. By the final year of the grant, the coaches' classroom observation data and reviews of student work confirmed that teachers had implemented inquiry-based methods district-wide. The coaches also facilitated vertical and horizontal alignment activities at the district and building levels to formalize best practices for teaching science. By the end of the grant, 485 teachers in targeted schools participated in approximately 70 PD sessions that focused on aligning curriculum, charting

"I liked that the [professional development] was hands-on. We did the actual experiments that the students will be doing."

—District Teacher, October 2012

⁴² Robotics kits included those by Lego. See <http://mindstorms.lego.com/en-us/history/default.aspx> and VEX. See <http://www.vexrobotics.com/>.

assessments, designing inquiry-based STEM units using the state's standards-based implementation model, and reviewing lab and textbooks used at each grade level. Collectively, the coaches and teachers created common assessments for each semester for Grades 3-10 that aligned with the state assessments. The grant-supported electronic assessment scanner now allows the district to administer, scan, and analyze the common assessment data.

Technology Infusion

Technology in the Science Classroom Supports Inquiry-Based Instruction and Learning. The district lacked basic high school science equipment and instructional technology at all school levels to support inquiry-based instruction. The grant filled these gaps by providing funding for interactive whiteboards in science classrooms at all levels, digital microscopes for elementary and middle school science classrooms, and digital data collection probes for high school science classrooms. High school science classrooms received basic lab equipment such as science desks and secure cabinets for storing chemicals and other materials. The grant also supported the use of Adaptive Curriculum,⁴³ an online portfolio of digital science lessons, inquiry-based activities, and classroom contests and challenges. During the first two years of the grant, science teachers at all school levels received PD from a knowledgeable district teacher on how to use the technology. The instructional coaches provided PD on how to incorporate the technology into inquiry-based instructional strategies.

Student/Family Support

Family-focused Science Events Allow Students to Share Inquiry-based Science Lessons with Families. The project included an annual science event for families and siblings where teachers and students shared examples of inquiry-based instruction. In years two and three, approximately 130 families attended the events and participated in over 30 experiments and activities which highlighted inquiry-based education and integrated technology in science classrooms. The instructional coaches and teachers worked together to plan and implement the annual science events.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Projects with a K-12 focus require the firm commitment and support of district-level administrators. District leaders supported the grant staff and demonstrated their commitment to the grant's goals and objectives, which helped set a positive tone for the project. In addition, efforts to improve student achievement and to maintain improvement gains require building a sustainable "culture of learning" for both students and teachers.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The new grant-supported common assessments are self-sustaining and will continue to be administered in Grades 3-10 with the help of the electronic assessment scanner purchased with grant funds. All participants value the instructional coaches very highly; the coaches will continue to be supported by the district following the grant period. The robotics enrichment program and the annual science events garnered a high level of interest and participation from district families and students. The district is exploring avenues for future funding for these important activities.

⁴³ For more information about Adaptive Curriculum, see www.adaptivecurriculum.com/us/.

Indian River Central School District (Philadelphia, NY)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Indian River Central School District used DoDEA funds to improve mathematics achievement at two elementary schools and one intermediate school with high numbers of military-connected students. The project provided mathematics professional development (PD) that was reinforced by building-level math coaches, instructional technology, and a support program for families of military-connected students. Project staff used data from annual teacher and parent surveys to monitor and modify project activities as needed. District-developed curriculum-based assessments administered during years two and three revealed that the targeted schools increased scores at each grade level in each year of the grant in most mathematics domains. Military-connected and non-military students alike demonstrated improvements throughout the grant period. By the end of the grant period, the district closed the achievement gap between military-connected and non-military students in Grades K-1 for the number sense and geometry domains.

Teaching Intervention

Math Coaches Provide and Reinforce PD, and Offer

Intensive Support to Teachers. Two full-time mathematics coaches focused on improving teacher practice at the classroom level by conducting PD to meet the needs of teachers in the targeted schools. The coaches provided a wide range of teacher support including team teaching, lesson modeling, and ad hoc assistance via e-mail, telephone, or drop-in. New teachers benefitted from the one-on-one technical assistance; they often are not aware of available district resources. Informal classroom observations helped coaches identify teachers' needs, and the coaches provided feedback on instructional strategies, lesson plans, student engagement strategies, and curriculum implementation. The math coaches also coordinated and provided PD on mathematics instruction. Topics included foundations of number sense, Singapore methods,⁴⁴ and visual modeling in the elementary math classroom. Nearly 90 percent of the targeted teachers received grant-supported mathematics instructional training.

To promote student engagement and encourage students to practice math skills, the coaches developed and disseminated "math bags" for students to use at home. Math bags that focus on counting might include dot-to-dot worksheets, readers that have a counting theme, and counting games. Each bag includes a letter to families that explains the purpose of the activities and outlined learning goals.

INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Philadelphia, NY)

Project Title: Promoting Student Achievement in Mathematics

Military Installation Served: Fort Drum

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 1,437

Number of Target Schools: 2

Project Focus: Grades 1-5 Mathematics

"The math coach has helped me think of ways to explain concepts and then question the students so I can tell if they truly understand. Additionally, my students love using the at-home math bags she put together."

—District Teacher, October 2012

⁴⁴ For more information, see <http://www.singaporemath.com/Default.asp>.

Technology Infusion

New Classroom Technology Supports Efforts to Improve Mathematics Instruction. The DoDEA grant supported the installation of SMART interactive whiteboards⁴⁵ in classrooms that lacked this technology, and all teachers received training on how to use the new equipment and integrate it into lesson plans. The grant also supported a web-based resource to enhance the mathematics curriculum in the targeted schools. Over 95 percent of teachers reported using IXL Math in their classrooms. IXL Math⁴⁶ provided a wide array of grade-level practice lessons to help students master critical skills and concepts, and students could access the program at school or from home.

“After my husband’s injuries in Afghanistan, my child’s teacher and the staff at the school were extremely helpful in making sure he was ‘OK.’ I am so extremely thankful that we had a teacher who was willing to spend extra time with him to help him adjust.”

—District Parent, October 2012

Student/Family Support

A Strong Family Support Program Facilitates Students’ Academic Success. The grant supported two full-time family liaisons to help address increased levels of family stress due to repeated and extended deployments and associated student absences at the targeted schools. The liaisons provided outreach and support to military families using a case management model. The family liaisons used many strategies to facilitate family support including (1) conducting home visits during the summer to provide academic enrichment activities (e.g., providing the math bags developed by the math coaches); (2) assisting with new student registration, leading school tours for new families, and creating and disseminating information about the schools’ resources; (3) coordinating activities between family, teacher, school counselors, social workers, etc.; (4) referring families to community services such as state and federal family assistance; and (5) providing one-on-one intensive support for students struggling with behavioral or academic issues. In addition, the family liaisons used data from the district’s annual parent survey to identify emerging issues. The local Cornell University Cooperative Extension Office provided PD for the family liaisons each grant year.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

Annual parent and teacher surveys showed which grant activities achieved the intended outcomes and which activities required modification. For example, more than half of the teachers reported that help from the mathematics coaches was important, and teachers requested that coaching be sustained after the grant. For a district with only two elementary teachers certified in mathematics, the assistance provided by the math coaches was a welcome addition. Project staff reported that to be effective and welcomed by teachers, instructional coaches must be skilled in developing relationships with both teachers and administrators.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The district’s 2013-14 budget proposal requests continuation funding for the two math coaches and funding for a third math coach in order to expand coaching activities to other district schools. The district cannot sustain funding for the family liaisons; however, district officials view their activities as important, and existing pupil services personnel will assume their activities.

⁴⁵ For more information about SMART interactive whiteboards, see <http://smarttech.com/smartboard>.

⁴⁶ For more information about IXL Math, see www.ixl.com.

Judson Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Judson Independent School District used grant funds to introduce an integrated mathematics intervention program at one district high school with a high population of military-connected students. The program includes tutoring, professional development (PD), and technology infusion. Student achievement in mathematics improved over the course of the grant, and outcomes exceeded the project's targets in each of the three grant years, with Grade 9-10 students posting percentage point gains of 9.5, 5.4, and 13.2 from 2009-10 to 2011-12, respectively. Military-connected students also exceeded the project's target outcome, posting a 4.5 percentage point gain in year three, compared to baseline data. Participating teachers and administrators report that the project had a significant impact on student achievement and was instrumental in helping students pass the mathematics portion of the state assessment.

JUDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (San Antonio, TX)

Project Title: Judson High School Math Initiative

Military Installation Served: Joint Base San Antonio

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 484

Number of Target Schools: 1

Project Focus: Grades 9-12 Mathematics

Subject-Specific Intervention

Intensive Multi-Pronged Intervention Strategies Help Students Succeed in Mathematics. The project included a multi-pronged effort to help students struggling with mathematics. The district provided tutoring twice per week after school. Assistance focused on math concepts included in the state assessment

"...the project was instrumental...in helping students pass the state-mandated test."

—Grantee Final Report,
December 2012

and reading intervention (using System 44⁴⁷) to support mathematics problem-solving. Teachers conducted more than 3,000 tutoring sessions in mathematics during the grant period. In addition to these after-school opportunities, the project also offered a "Super Saturday" program of additional instruction, which provided hands-on activities, manipulatives, group work, calculator games, and inquiry-based projects. Each four-hour Super Saturday event had a specific focus (e.g., on a specific topic or grade level). Over 1,500 students participated in Super Saturday events, including 283 military-connected students, with attendance increasing consistently

throughout the grant period. In addition to these tutoring opportunities, one new full-time certified mathematics teacher provided remediation to students who needed one-on-one attention. The grant also supported a credit recovery initiative using Education 20/20,⁴⁸ a web-based, self-paced program. Of 131 seniors participating during the year, 3,130 students completed the Education 20/20 program. The program has been so successful that the school is now offering it to all students. The program is available to students either in school or from their home computer. Students logged over 1,200 sessions on Education 20/20 during years two and three, which translated into "tens of thousands" of hours of support, according to the school. Mathematics topics comprised the majority of Education 20/20 sessions.

⁴⁷ For more information about System 44, see <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/foundational-reading-phonics/system-44/index.htm>.

⁴⁸ For more information about Education 20/20, see www.education2020.com.

Teaching Intervention

A Wide Range of Professional Development Helps

Teachers Build Instructional Skills. The district provided school-wide PD on differentiated instruction, with a focus on rigor and relevance, twice during the grant period. Kilgo Consulting provided PD to mathematics teachers on mathematics scope and sequence.⁴⁹ These sessions integrated Judson's math curriculum with Mimio interactive whiteboards. The math department and the math curriculum specialist attended the T³ International Conference for training on using the Texas Instruments Nspire calculators and integrating technology into their teaching practice. This conference experience helped transform the math department's culture, and now teachers work collaboratively instead of independently. After the conference, the math curriculum specialist embraced mathematics learning using technology, and as a result the specialist developed a district-funded technology initiative. In the third year, the grant supported three part-time mathematics coaches. The coaches helped nine Algebra I teachers once per week for three months to reinforce the PD by modeling instructional strategies, conducting classroom observations, and providing individualized feedback to teachers. The Algebra I intervention supports and prepares students for higher level math.

"Before the grant, our math teachers worked individually to make students successful; the grant allowed us to find a way to work together in a more systematic and logical way."

—Grantee Interview, January 22, 2013



Technology Infusion

Instructional Technology Promotes Engaging, Student-Centered, Interactive

Lessons. The grant supported the purchase of 500 Texas Instruments Nspire⁵⁰ graphing calculators. All mathematics teachers and their students now routinely use these calculators. Mathematics classrooms also received 25 Mimio interactive whiteboards⁵¹ to further enhance mathematics instruction. Teachers received training on the use of the technology and their implementation in the classroom. The grant also facilitated the purchase of 16 tablet computers for classroom use, creating a 1:2 ratio of tablet-to-student for lessons that use interactive math software programs.

Student/Family Support

Outreach to Families Increases Involvement in Their Students' Academic Lives. The project supported a number of on-campus parent-focused activities, including open-house events with a mathematics focus, and other activities such as freshman preregistration. The district incorporated grant-supported events into other district events to elevate their visibility and boost parent participation. As a result, mathematics is now a focus at every school event. For instance, combining a math event with freshman preregistration increased the math department's reach and provided more personnel to help with the overall event. At the district's open house event, a representative from tutor.com⁵² demonstrated the site's tutoring services, which are free to military families; the tutor.com representatives registered families on the spot. At these events, the department also explained the overall structure, variety, and availability of math classes at the high school level as well as career options that involve math. The grant also supported one off-campus family field trip to Randolph AFB to expose students and their families to real-world applications of mathematics and science.

⁴⁹ For more information about Kilgo professional development, see www.margaretkilgo.com/Workshop-SS.htm.

⁵⁰ For more information about TI-Nspire calculators, see <http://education.ti.com/calculators/products/US/Nspire-Family/CX-Handhelds>.

⁵¹ For more information about Mimio whiteboards, see <http://www.mimio.com/en-NA.aspx>.

⁵² For more information, see <http://www.tutor.com/>.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

The district had to simplify its project vision as the grant progressed, and identify a central purpose and focus that met the needs of all participants. Narrowing the project focus helped increase project cohesiveness and success. Teachers reported that having the entire mathematics department attend the Texas Instruments training was a unifying experience that resulted in increased excitement about the technology and improved attitudes about mathematics instruction. Teachers also reported that having a proactive Grant Coordinator was instrumental in coordinating and integrating all aspects of the project. Teachers recommended that the Grant Coordinator position be fully dedicated to grant activities so that the focus remains on project organization and progress. The district found that the Grant Coordinator position is less effective if it must be shared across multiple projects. Finally, the district struggled to define the grant's professional development component so it would meet both the district and DoDEA's objectives. Flexibility was critical in overcoming this obstacle. For example, the district did not include coaching in its DoDEA application, but coaching became a valuable intervention because it met the needs of all stakeholders, including the district, the math department, and DoDEA.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

Stakeholders perceived grant-supported activities to be very successful. The district and school intend to continue support for grant-funded activities (with a few exceptions), including off-campus student/family events and transportation for students participating in after-school tutoring and Super Saturday events. The district will support a minimum of two staff development opportunities each year for mathematics faculty, but stipends for participants will not be available. Due to the favorable response to the new mathematics remediation teacher, the school has set up a system for remediation that continues to provide one-on-one mathematics instruction for low-performing students, but eliminates the need for this full-time position. Instead, the district will use ALEKS,⁵³ an online diagnostic skills-based mathematics program.



⁵³ For more information about ALEKS, see www.aleks.com.

Northside Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

The Northside Independent School District focused DoDEA grant activities on creating a college-bound culture with the goal of improving mathematics problem-solving skills at one middle and five elementary schools. The district met or exceeded intended targets on multiple student achievement measures, with military-connected students exceeding their goals. By the end of the grant period, 82 percent of military-connected students in the targeted schools met the proficiency standard on the problem-solving objective of the state assessment, thus exceeding the intended improvement target. Cohort data for Grade 4 and 5 students mirror this finding; students showed consistent improvement on the problem-solving objective of the assessment during each grant year. The percent of middle school students participating in advanced-level math classes increased in each grant year, and three of five elementary schools improved their accountability standard in mathematics by moving from “recognized” to “exemplary” status.

NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (San Antonio, TX)

Project Title: Achieving Academic Excellence for Military Students

Military Installation Served: Lackland AFB, Kelly AFB, and Joint Base San Antonio

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 1,182

Number of Target Schools: 6

Project Focus: Grades K-8 Mathematics

Subject-Specific and Teaching Interventions

“The key to our success was the widespread collaboration—within grade levels and within buildings—that occurred during the course of the grant.”

—Grantee Interview, February 2013

Supplemental Programs Support Improved Achievement in Mathematics and Establishment of a College-Bound Culture.

A full-time grant-funded project facilitator worked with district-supported math specialists to implement the framework for the grant’s supplemental programs. To address problem-solving in mathematics, the grantee incorporated the Exemplars⁵⁴ program of activities and assessments into their mathematics curriculum at all of the targeted schools. The Exemplars program provides

teachers with differentiated problem-solving tasks aligned with state mathematics standards while engaging students’ interest and supporting skill mastery.⁵⁵ Teachers received professional development (PD) on Exemplars in each year of the grant, and the project facilitator and math specialists conducted “Exemplar Days” for teachers in each grade level to model Exemplar activities. Teachers expanded the number of Exemplar activities in the classroom throughout the grant period, from three activities per semester during year one to weekly activities by year three. To support enhanced expectations for student achievement in mathematics and to instill a college-bound culture, the district also implemented Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)⁵⁶ in Grades 4-5 and Grades 6-8. Each grant year, the project facilitator and math specialists provided PD in embedded AVID enrichment activities at all targeted grade levels. Many AVID activities included both parents and siblings. For College Night, students conducted research about going

⁵⁴ For more information about Exemplars, see www.exemplars.com.

⁵⁵ A 2012 DoDEA publication, *Strategy Boosters Lessons Learned from DoDEA Educational Partnership Grants* provides detailed information about the grantee’s implementation of Exemplars. See <http://www.dodk12grants.org/Docs/DoDEAStrategyBoostersReport13.pdf>.

⁵⁶ For more information about AVID, see www.avid.org.

to college and presented their findings to their families at an evening event held at the school. Another significant AVID activity at all school levels included daily use of student agendas, which helped teach organization and planning skills. Families signed the agenda each day, which facilitated and enhanced parent-teacher dialogue. The project facilitator led and facilitated the implementation of Exemplars and AVID at each building. The project facilitator also conducted routine classroom observations to monitor the progress of these programs and provide feedback to teachers and the math specialists.

New Common Assessments Provide Critical Feedback on Students' Progress. To assess student progress incrementally in the mathematics focus area (i.e., problem-solving), the district developed common mathematics assessments for all district schools. The project facilitator worked with the math specialists and math teachers to develop and implement these assessments, providing the feedback needed to adjust instructional and curricular strategies throughout the grant period.

Technology Infusion

Instructional Technology Engages Students and Complements Supplemental Mathematics Programs. The grant purchased instructional technology including Promethean⁵⁷ whiteboards (in Grades 2-5), Mobi⁵⁸ slates (in Grades 6-8), and student response devices for both types of interactive boards. This technology facilitated an interactive and dynamic learning environment which assesses student learning in real time, allowing teachers to modify classroom activities as needed. The project facilitator and math specialists coordinated the training for teachers on the use of the technology and its use in the Exemplars and AVID programs.

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

The keys to the grantee's success were two-fold. First, the district sought and acquired input from teachers and administrators before applying for the grant. As a result, the project benefitted from strong levels of commitment and buy-in across the targeted schools. Second, the project facilitator consistently collaborated with campus staff, which helped to integrate grant activities and define participants' roles, in turn helping to ensure that stakeholders met grant objectives in a timely manner. The project facilitator conducted routine monthly meetings in each building to drive the grant's activities. Building administration and the district-funded math specialists attended the meetings to plan implementation activities, develop and implement the PD plan, identify and deploy resources, and solve problems. The project facilitator established strong collaborative relationships with the math specialists and teachers in each building.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

Grant-funded activities such as Exemplars are now part of the campus culture at the targeted schools, and implementation will continue with district support. The district expanded AVID to 13 additional campuses using Title 1 and additional DoDEA funds received in 2012. The new DoDEA funds will build on the success of the current grant by expanding efforts to address students' weakness in problem-solving and enhance a college-bound culture in every district mathematics classroom. New DoDEA funds will help support the full-time project facilitator, and will continue to spur intensive efforts to transform classroom culture through PD and technical guidance at the classroom and building levels.

⁵⁷ For more information about Promethean products, see www.prometheanworld.com.

⁵⁸ For more information about Mobi products, see <http://www.einstruction.com>.

Waynesville R-VI School District (Waynesville, MO)

Project Overview and Student Outcomes

Waynesville R-VI School District used its DoDEA grant to (1) develop and implement a strategic professional development (PD) plan and (2) support student and family transition activities. The grant focused on six district schools (four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school) with the highest populations of military-connected students. The district supported implementation of similar activities at the remaining five schools in the district. After the three-year grant period, district students posted a 10 percent increase in students performing at or above the proficient level on the mathematics portion of the state assessment, exceeding the goal of a five percent increase. Each targeted school met or exceeded the goal, with military-connected students in five of six schools meeting or exceeding the goal. In communication arts, the district collectively posted a six percent increase in students performing at or above the proficient level on the state assessment, exceeding the district's goal. Four of six targeted schools met or exceeded the goal in communication arts, and military-connected students in three of six schools met or exceeded the goal.

WAYNESVILLE R-VI SCHOOL DISTRICT (Waynesville, MO)

Project Title: Responding to Student Needs: An Integrated Model

Military Installation Served: Fort Leonard Wood

Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12: 4,320

Number of Target Schools: 6

Project Focus: K-12 mathematics and communication arts

Teaching Intervention

"The district recognized the effectiveness of the Instructional Coaches, and added the three positions as permanent staffing positions starting in the 2012-13 school year."

—Grantee Final Report, Fall 2012

Instructional Coaches Develop and Implement a Strategic Professional Development Plan and Provide Individual Support to Teachers. The grant supported three full-time Instructional Coaches who developed and delivered intensive PD to support teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies. The Coaches provided one-on-one assistance and conducted workshops and multi-day academies during and after the school day and during the summer starting in year three of the grant. The district organized nearly 30 wide-ranging PD sessions during 2010-12, including Assessment for Learning⁵⁹

and Marzano's Instructional Strategies.⁶⁰ The district required participating teachers to demonstrate how they used the training in their classrooms. The Instructional Coaches also supported full implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) in the district, following several years of attempts to incorporate PLCs with limited success.

The Instructional Coaches also implemented systematic classroom observations ("learning walks") throughout the grant period to identify PD needs. Instructional Coaches coordinated and led classroom observation teams that included building administrators and teachers from other targeted schools. A formal data collection protocol captured critical classroom context and activities such as (1) instructional strategies

⁵⁹ For more information about Assessment for Learning, see www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au/default.asp.

⁶⁰ For more information about Marzano's Instructional Strategies, see www.marzanoresearch.com.

used; (2) identifiable learning objectives; (3) examples of differentiated instruction; (4) technology use; (5) display of student work; (6) level of student demonstration of knowledge; and (7) level of teacher-student engagement. The team observed 3,087 classrooms during the project period, visiting each building at least once every quarter; they observed individual classrooms an average of two times each year. Findings from the “learning walks” helped to shape the PD topics and schedule during the course of the grant.

Supplemental Materials Provide the Tools Needed to Support New Instructional Strategies and Help Low-Performing Students. The district also used grant funds to purchase a variety of materials to support teachers and students. Several new intervention programs such as Study Island⁶¹ and Reading Recovery⁶² filled gaps in the district’s existing Response to Intervention program, and teachers received PD to implement the programs. New materials, such as math manipulatives and leveled reading books helped students master mathematics and reading skills.

Student/Family Support

A Comprehensive Student/Family Support Program Enhances Student Engagement and Facilitates a Stable Learning Environment. With grant support, the district expanded the existing Student-to-Student transition program (S2S) at the high school to all remaining district schools. The S2S programs included building-level student transition councils, a district-level advisory team, and monthly welcome activities for new students at each school. Over 200 parent workshops benefitted nearly 1,500 attendees from 2009 to 2012. Workshop topics included developing communication and mentoring skills, college preparation, bullying awareness and intervention, internet safety, and building mathematics and reading skills. The grant also supported existing student enrichment clubs by providing materials and staff support.

“The grant has helped the district develop a cadre of experts, and these experts will be able to coordinate, plan, and deliver PD long after the grant has ended.”

—Grantee Interview, February 2013

Lessons Learned and Discoveries

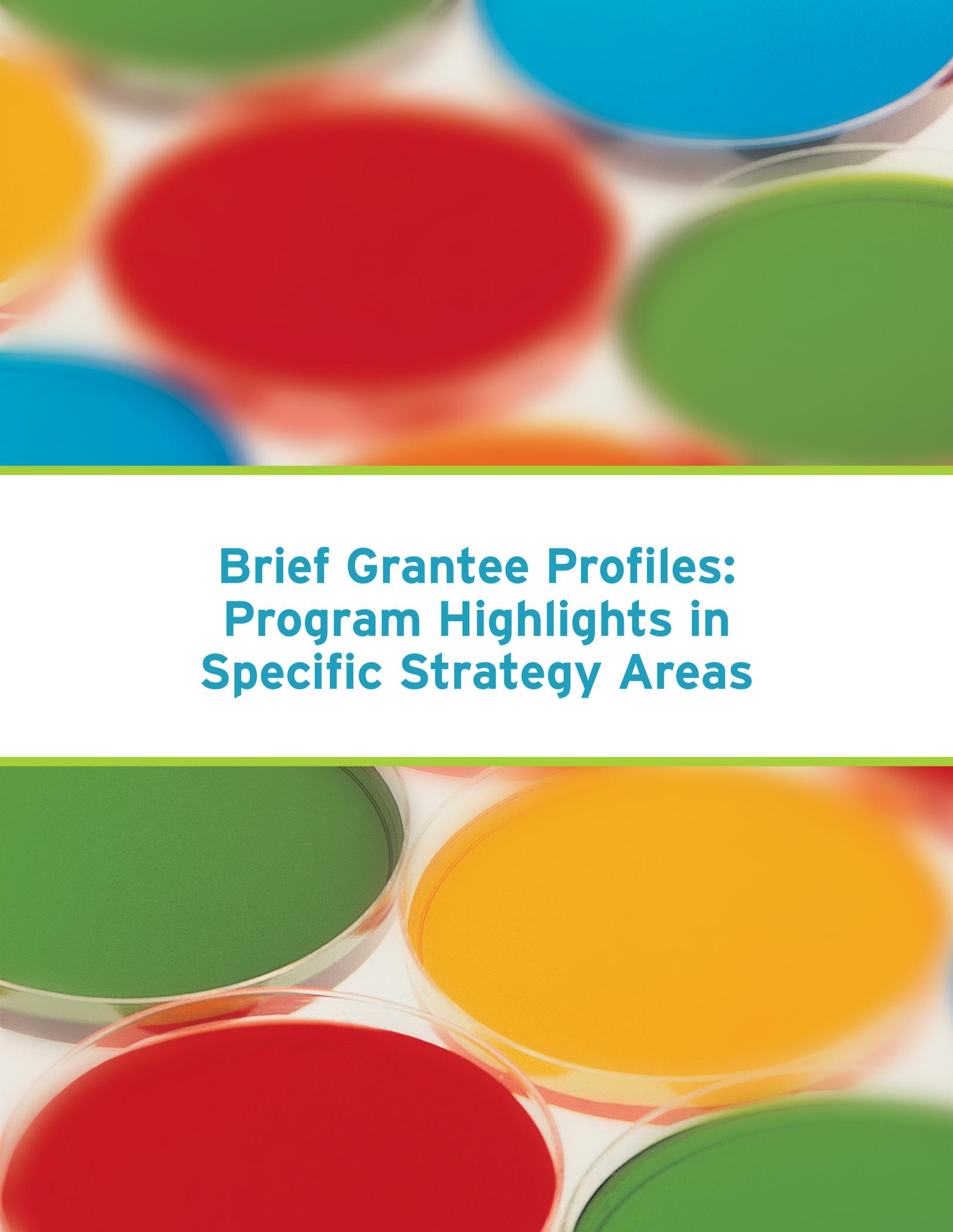
“Learning walks” (i.e., classroom observations) became a useful activity that yielded many lessons learned during the grant. The district discovered that administrators often lack knowledge about instructional strategies and need PD to be effective instructional leaders. Classroom observations worked best when unannounced and when common staff or a coordinator led the effort. When observation teams included teachers from other buildings, the observing teachers not only analyzed the classroom teacher’s practices, but also reflected on their own instructional strategies. This practice led to better understanding of district expectations for teaching and learning at all district schools.

Efforts to Sustain Successful Grant-Funded Activities

The Instructional Coaches became permanent district-funded positions in the 2012-13 school year. Because the learning walks helped to identify teachers’ PD needs, the district will continue these activities every month at each building. The protocol for the learning walks will be modified to reflect the district’s new 2012 DoDEA grant, which will further integrate project-based learning focused on 21st century skills. The district also committed to continuing all components of the student/parent support program.

⁶¹ For more information about Study Island, see www.studyisland.com.

⁶² For more information about Reading Recovery, see www.readingrecoveryworks.org.

The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred view of several petri dishes containing agar. The agar is in various colors: red, blue, green, and yellow. The dishes are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping. The lighting is bright, highlighting the smooth texture of the agar. A thin green horizontal line separates the top image from the text area, and another thin green horizontal line separates the text area from the bottom image.

**Brief Grantee Profiles:
Program Highlights in
Specific Strategy Areas**

Brief Grantee Profiles: Program Highlights in Specific Strategy Areas

Professional Development to Build Teacher Capacity and Improve Student Achievement

All projects included professional development (PD) as an integral component to help teachers implement new curricula and technology. The extent and quality of the PD in many of the projects helped teachers and staff integrate new materials and tools and achieve positive results. Older models of PD delivery often include off-site seminars and workshops at the beginning of the project. Off-site workshop PD usually introduced new programs or technologies; however, grantees discovered a need to move beyond the traditional PD model. Schools and districts found that translating new knowledge and skills into classroom practice and meeting the needs of new staff required additional individualized, ongoing, and self-sustaining PD. Grantees implemented several PD models such as coaching and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); they also developed new resource materials for self-guided professional development. The summaries below contain examples of how projects used innovative methods of PD.

Derby School District, KS (Derby)

Derby raised achievement scores in science and math by introducing a project-based STEM environment at Wineteer Elementary School. The district implemented numerous activities; however, the most fruitful practice proved to be student team-based learning. Teachers received intensive PD on structuring classrooms to establish student teams that encouraged problem-solving activities and increased student engagement. Teachers were enthusiastic about integrating team-based learning into every part of the curriculum. They noted that the team structure built class cohesion and improved academics. In addition to providing PD to existing staff, the district used DoDEA grant funds to purchase library and classroom materials to sustain the program. Together, the resources and teacher commitment to the team-based learning process continued to boost achievement in all curriculum areas.

Project Name or Focus:

Wineteer Aerospace Excellence Academy

Military Installation:

McConnell AFB

Military-Connected

Students, 2011-12: 230

El Paso Independent School District, TX (El Paso)

El Paso revitalized its K-12 science curriculum using DoDEA grant funds. The district introduced a three-tier intervention model into the science curriculum to improve student achievement in science and upgrade science resources. These resources included a greenhouse, district planetarium, and a live materials distribution center for supplying labs. The percentage of students achieving proficiency or higher levels on standardized assessments provides evidence that El Paso has made a successful transition to a multi-grade level, technology-rich science curriculum. To help sustain these improvements, El Paso created a video library. The videos model best practices in classroom science instruction and interventions. The video library is a resource for continuous improvement, helps train new teachers, and promotes increased implementation of the instructional practices.

Project Name or Focus: 21st

Century Science Classrooms

Military Installation: Fort

Bliss

Military-Connected Students,

2011-12: 2,175

Long Beach School District, MS (Long Beach)

Long Beach provided online course network and teacher-based interventions to targeted middle and high school students. The intervention provided credit recovery opportunities for students both during and after school. While all target goals were not fully met, students participating in these opportunities consistently improved their performance on state assessments in Algebra, Biology, and English. Long Beach students' achievement exceeded state averages in all of these areas by the third year of the project. During the second project year, a professional development consultant evaluated implementation and provided additional training on best teaching practices. This continuous improvement model—paying attention to the needs of the teachers and providing ongoing professional development—may have been one key to the success of this project.

Project Name or Focus:

Credit Recovery and Remediation Program

Military Installation: NCB
Gulfport and Keesler AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 107

Randolph Field School District, TX (Randolph Field)

Texas recently adopted new state standards along with corresponding assessment tools and curriculum that align with the standards. Randolph Field established goals to increase the number of students who would achieve a “commendable” status by exceeding standards. To meet these challenges, Randolph Field developed a faculty and staff PLC. As noted in the final report, this initiative engendered “a process of building shared knowledge and supporting a culture of learning by doing” which resulted in “a significant paradigm shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning.” The final report attributed increases in student engagement and achievement to a district-wide shift toward a more collaborative culture. This included implementing a “meaningful data-driven model” for planning. Collaborative teams developed and refined norms, developed common curriculum pacing guides, designed common formative and summative assessments, and implemented systematic intervention policies. Over the three-year grant period, outcomes improved in nearly every content area. School staff believe that the PLC structure will result in a continuous cycle of improvement for their students.

Project Name or Focus:

Dedicated to Excellence

Military Installation: Joint Base
San Antonio and Brooks AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,005

Vernon Parish School District, LA (Vernon)

After implementing PLCs, the district discovered that student gains did not result from creating a PLC structure in isolation. The DoDEA grant provided the funds to expand and improve the PLCs through staff development focused on specific criteria and school-based coaching that met teachers' immediate needs. The project director noted that by the end of the project, “the PLCs moved from simply being faculty meetings to meetings focused on student achievement....Teachers are more productive; they have more tools to work with because they share ideas in the PLCs.” The district met the goals for improving student achievement in English and math proficiency in Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. The project evaluator also noted positive trends in early literacy skills. PLCs continue to focus on all grade levels and include a research-based instructional model guiding classroom practice. Vernon expects to sustain this high-achievement culture and continue to see student achievement gains.

Project Name or Focus:

Student Engagement - Creating a Culture of High Academic Achievement

Military Installation: Fort Polk

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 2,400

Innovative Technology to Support District Goals

Many DoDEA grant projects used technology to administer student assessments, to give teachers access to online resources for PD and lesson materials, and to permit students to use supplemental lessons for remedial support or advanced course work. New technology brings challenges beyond simple mechanical use of the equipment. School buildings require a technology infrastructure that often requires upgrading. Teachers need PD to become comfortable with the equipment and also to develop lesson plans that effectively harness and incorporate new technology. Both district personnel and classroom teachers need to be involved in developing policies for technology use, maintenance, and integration with standards and curriculum. Innovative technology often requires innovation in other areas. The summaries below highlight how technology expands learning opportunities, PD opportunities, and changes curricula and pedagogy.

Cache Public Schools, OK (Cache)

Cache updated its media center and technology resources and fully integrated both into classroom instruction. The media specialists and the classroom teachers collaboratively engaged in extensive PD. Together, the teachers and specialists acquired more relevant materials, planned media-rich lessons, and integrated technology more fully into the curriculum. Over a three-year period, teachers and media specialists determined which materials and technology to introduce and planned the supporting PD. Reading and math proficiency among military-connected students rose significantly. In addition, the changes resulted in a 35 percent increase in media material circulation—a factor highly correlated in research literature with a culture of high achievement in schools.

Project Name or Focus:

Cache It Forward

Military Installation: Fort Sill**Military-Connected Students,
2011-12:** 410

Carthage Consolidated School District, NY (Carthage)

Carthage implemented a multi-faceted project to support English Language Arts (ELA) across the K-12 curriculum, improve high school graduation rates, and support students' social and emotional needs in after-school programs. Each project goal included strategies that integrated computer-based academic resources. To improve graduation rates, the district introduced online courses for credit recovery and academic support. At the beginning of the project, Carthage established the online courses; in subsequent years, the district added more courses to meet students' needs. By 2012, 350 high school students were enrolled in the courses to make up failed classes, access additional courses to earn a Regents Diploma after moving to the state, or receive credit for classes when transferring mid-year. In the final year of the grant, the district developed two new courses: Transfer Math and Transfer Science, which allowed students to complete courses started in other states and earn the New York Regents Diploma.

Project Name or Focus:

Academic Success, Higher
Achievement

Military Installation: Fort Drum**Military-Connected Students,
2011-12:** 1,516

Craven County Schools, NC (Craven)

Craven's project aimed to improve reading literacy among all K-12 students; the district implemented two online remediation programs in support of the goal. While many participating students met individual growth targets, the program did not generate significant gains school-wide in Reading or English assessments. The project included a quasi-experimental study to compare participating and non-participating students in the remediation. After extensive review of implementation data, the evaluator concluded that the online programs were not aligned with the district's general English Language Arts curriculum. The district is including the findings in future plans to better address student needs.

Project Name or Focus:

Joining Forces to Read

Military Installation:

MCAS Cherry Point, Camp Lejeune, and MCAS New River Air Station

Military-Connected**Students, 2011-12:** 2,138

Geary County Unified School District, KS (Geary)

The district used DoDEA funds to purchase software programs that address students' remedial needs (e.g., Scholastic's System 44)⁶³ and overall academic achievement (e.g., AVID).⁶⁴ The district introduced the programs incrementally, first providing PD to teachers on how to use the new programs, and then moving forward with other resources. Geary continues to evaluate and refine the resource matrix and use diagnostic tools to help teachers create modules that align with the new common core state standards to meet students' needs.

Project Name or Focus:

The Honor Challenge

Military Installation:

Fort Riley

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 4,261

Hardin County Schools, KY (Hardin)

The July 2012 Strategy Boosters Report highlighted the process that Hardin created to share student assessment data. The district developed the process to expand on another grant-funded Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative that included new academic intervention components. Principals and teachers noted that two software programs, Carnegie Math⁶⁵ and Read 180,⁶⁶ implemented as supplemental programs, supported interventions for individual student needs in the middle and high schools. Hardin also used grant funds to provide PD to help teachers align interventions with the curriculum and each student's needs. The district also refined the PLC process to ensure continued data use and delivery of instruction. The overall implementation of the RtI program, Carnegie Math and Read 180 helped all students, including military-connected students, increase proficiency on state assessments in math and reading. Because of these improvements, the district funded the implementation of Carnegie Math district-wide, and made Read 180 available to all schools upon request.

Project Name or Focus:

The Hardin County School District Reading and Math Intervention Focus

Military Installation:

Fort Knox

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 2,156

⁶³ For more information, see <http://system44.scholastic.com/>.

⁶⁴ For more information, see <http://www.avid.org/>.

⁶⁵ For more information, see <http://www.carnegielearning.com/>.

⁶⁶ For more information, see <http://read180.scholastic.com/>.

Harrison School District #2, CO (Harrison)

Harrison used professional development (PD) to implement several new initiatives to improve math achievement. The principal at one elementary school reported that Scholastic's Fastt Math,⁶⁷ a computer-based program, excited students "about learning math facts." Harrison also adopted a teacher-to-teacher model of ongoing PD to sustain the math focus and interventions in the district. Formative assessments showed increases in the proportion of students demonstrating proficiency in Grades 4-5 from 20 to 60 percent in the 2011-2012 school year. The 2012 Colorado Student Assessment Program scores showed that 96 percent of military-connected students in the school scored at the proficient or advanced level in math. The program also generated reports for families that provided a clear picture of students' strengths and weaknesses. Families liked this individualized approach. The project's annual report also noted that, because of all the components of the Math Intervention Program, teachers "feel there is now a new focus on math."

Project Name or Focus:

HSD2 Elementary Math Intervention Program

Military Installation: Fort Carson, Schriever AFB, and Peterson AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 401

Hopewell City Public Schools, VA (Hopewell)

Hopewell structured its project to improve reading and math achievement scores by integrating SuccessMaker⁶⁸ into the curriculum. This program included new classroom instructional strategies, online assessments, and computer-based remedial modules, requiring new technology and PD on the curriculum. During the first grant year, the district provided resources and training on technology and research-based instructional strategies. During the second and third years, teachers implemented the strategies in Grades 3-5 reading and math classes. The project added after-school tutoring for students during the final grant year. PD occurred throughout the grant period in a variety of formats, including a district-wide "Technology Unleashed Day" and a "Technology Expo" that exposed teachers to additional instructional technology. Changes to the state's assessments and standards meant that project schools did not meet targeted achievement outcomes. However, the program did benefit students and teachers, as reflected in formative assessments and survey feedback. Therefore, future district plans include continuing SuccessMaker, expanding after-school tutoring sessions, and conducting additional PD to assist teachers in integrating technology into instruction.

Project Name or Focus:

Setting the Standard for Excellence

Military Installation: Fort Lee

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 67

Lawton Public Schools, OK (Lawton)

Lawton introduced a new K-12 science curriculum district-wide that included hands-on inquiry-based lessons as the standard for all science instruction. This comprehensive change required phasing in technology to classrooms, developing authentic classroom labs, and providing field research experiences at all grade levels. To implement this plan, Lawton scheduled how and when to implement the enhancements and align them with the state standards. The evaluator

Project Name or Focus:

Science Quest

Military Installation: Fort Sill

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 7,041

⁶⁷ For more information, see <http://teacher.scholastic.com/math-fact-fluency/fastt-math-next-generation/>.

⁶⁸ For more information see <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZk99>.

noted that the incremental "...implementation of technology was one of the major strengths of the program." The plan included hiring a technology consultant and providing PD activities so that teachers could gradually begin to integrate the technology into their lessons. Gains in science proficiency surpassed outcome targets, with over 90 percent of students in Grade 5 and 87 percent of students in Grade 8 meeting state standards in science overall in 2012. In addition, student performance in biology dramatically improved, with 78 percent of students meeting state standards in biology the second year of the grant—up from 48 percent previously. To sustain PD, Lawton developed resource guides for teachers at all grade levels based on state standards and the successful practices developed by lead teachers. These resource guides help to improve science instruction in the district.

Morongo Unified School District, CA (Morongo)

Morongo implemented a systematic approach to raise student achievement by augmenting rigorous academic programs at all grade levels. Activities included using an online course format for AP courses and credit recovery with more courses added each year. The district also phased in AVID⁶⁹ at the high school level. Hundreds of additional students took advantage of challenging academic offerings through these initiatives over time.

Project Name or Focus:

Challenging Students to Achieve at Higher Levels

Military Installation: MCB 29 Palms

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 2,576

Muscogee County School District, GA (Muscogee)

Muscogee used DoDEA funds to build a web-based library of video lessons for all grades and subjects over the period of the grant. They purchased equipment and provided PD to assist teachers in developing podcasts for the website. The podcasts give students the opportunity to review material or to catch up on missed lessons. The podcasts also give families access to lessons so they can support students' learning when deployed overseas. Military families expressed enthusiasm about using the technology to participate remotely in school programs and teacher conferences. Teachers noted that the new technology also encouraged students with learning differences, such as autism, to participate more fully in class.

Project Name or Focus:

Casting for Student Achievement

Military Installation: Fort Benning

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,393

Tucson Unified School District, AZ (Tucson)

Tucson focused its DoDEA grant on the elementary school located on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Because the school's enrollment is 100 percent military-connected students, the high student mobility rate requires a focus on assessment and individualized instruction. Tucson built a new, comprehensive math program and integrated a technology-based assessment and interactive

Project Name or Focus:

Mathematics Foundations for Elementary Student Success

Military Installation: Davis-Monthan AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 485

⁶⁹ For more information about AVID see <http://www.avid.org/>.

instructional program. The district transitioned to enVision Math⁷⁰ as the core math program and purchased A+nyWhere Learning Systems⁷¹—an adaptive assessment program that allows continuous student evaluation and use of supplemental materials. While new state achievement tests and cut scores meant that the overall percentage of students meeting or exceeding math standards dropped after the first year of the project, students in Grades 3-5 made steady improvements in subsequent years. The number of students in Grade 4 who achieved proficiency increased by 17 percentage points in the final year of the project. The district and school feedback about the technology-focused culture was positive; they plan to increase at-risk students' use of the programs.



⁷⁰ For more information see <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZu69>.

⁷¹ For more information see <http://www.amered.com/index.php>.

Data-Driven Decision-Making That Informs Individualized Instruction

In the last 20 years, schools have escalated attempts to develop multiple strategies to improve student outcomes. Prior to receiving DoDEA funding, many 2009 grantees implemented research-based initiatives such as Response to Instruction (RtI) to remediate targeted students' needs. However, recent economic conditions prevented expanding successful pilot programs into additional district schools. It also delayed acquiring equipment, materials, or PD needed to implement these initiatives in a comprehensive manner. The summaries below provide descriptions of key processes or materials funded by the DoDEA grant that allowed full implementation or scaling up of successful projects. Many grantees achieved goals by building on existing plans and infrastructure and continuing to gather and use data to identify and meet student needs.

Bryan School District, GA (Bryan)

Bryan implemented its project to improve student performance in math and reading at two district elementary schools. The district created the "Successful Scholars" program by integrating a variety of individualized remedial program modules and differentiated intervention strategies in mathematics and reading for academically disadvantaged students in Grades 2-5. The schools also rearranged the master schedule and scheduled intervention periods during the school day to ensure timely delivery of instruction to each student. The district met or exceeded its student achievement outcome targets, with all targeted grade levels demonstrating increased achievement in both subjects on the state assessment and on building-level quarterly assessments that measure students' academic growth.

Project Name or Focus:

Direct Instruction + Computer Based Learning = Successful Scholars

Military Installation: Fort Stewart Military Reservation and Hunter Army Air Field

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 553

Clovis Municipal Schools, NM (Clovis)

Clovis is among several districts that introduced common assessments as a tool to improve academic outcomes. The district differentiated instruction for the elementary reading curriculum and collected and used data consistently. PD centered on numerous topics focused on district policy (e.g., new curriculum) and information on school and grade levels (e.g., assessment, data use and lesson planning for differentiated instruction, reading instruction, and classroom evaluation for administrators). The emphasis on evaluation resulted in collaborative walk-through classroom observations. The observations helped improve the reliability of classroom evaluations and introduced a common conversation on instructional improvement through ongoing use of data. Another innovative activity involved data conferences for principals which showed principals how to use a PLC format to evaluate school data during regular principal meetings. The principals like the program and have adopted it for their own school-level meetings, bringing teachers and staff together to work with data. Teachers believe that integrating regular data use into the district has helped sustain a "data culture" and has improved instruction that meets students' needs.

Project Name or Focus:

An Integrated Approach to Teaching Reading

Military Installation: Cannon AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 659

Coronado Unified School District, CA (Coronado)

Coronado designed a wide-reaching project (1) to improve K-12 achievement in ELA and Math and (2) to increase credit recovery opportunities for high school students. The final evaluation report noted that using Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)⁷² as a formative assessment tool was central to effective application of the 21st century technology resources. Teachers have developed a data culture by using formative student data to inform instruction. The evaluator noted that using MAP “to set goals with students and plan specific instruction is becoming the foundation of our instructional program.”

Project Name or Focus:

Students Achieving through Technology in the 21st Century (SATT 21)

Military Installation: Naval Base Coronado

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,132

Cumberland County School District, NC (Cumberland)

Cumberland students' math and science proficiency scores increased across the eight schools that received DoDEA funds. Elementary and middle school students gained five percentage points on end-of-grade math exam pass rates, while high school students gained eight percentage points on end-of-course scores. In science, scores increased by 16 percentage points for elementary and middle school students; military-connected student performance increased by 13 percentage points. Cumberland achieved its outcome goals by focusing on individualized instruction in the classroom and using instructional coaches to help teachers create student-centered lessons. The district also increased the number of students receiving tutoring (546 students received tutoring in 2012) and the number of students participating in STEM enrichment activities such as after-school robotics. Over the course of the grant, student participation in enrichment activities increased by an impressive 267 percent.

Project Name or Focus:

Promoting Student Achievement at Schools Impacted by Military Force Structure Changes

Military Installation: Fort Bragg and Pope AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,563

Elgin Public Schools, OK (Elgin)

Elgin instituted an after-school support program designed to improve outcomes in reading and math for Grades 6-12. In order to increase participation in the tutoring program, Fort Sill included arts enrichment modules in the after-school sessions. While pass rates on Algebra I and English end-of-course tests improved, teachers also noticed that many students still struggled in science classes. By continually assessing the program outcomes and keeping the content of the after-school sessions flexible, Elgin was able to add tutoring to meet individual student needs. Over 350 military students have benefitted from both academic support and arts enrichment.

Project Name or Focus:

Hands Out

Military Installation: Fort Sill

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 354

⁷² A computer-based adaptive assessment developed by Northwest Evaluation Association. For more information, see <http://www.nwea.org/products-services/assessments>.

Lackland Independent School District, TX (Lackland)

Lackland consists of two schools, one elementary and one junior-senior high school that serve K-12 students whose families work at Lackland Air Force Base. The two schools face unique challenges since the enrollment consists of 100 percent military-connected students who transition out of the schools every two to three years due to their families' military reassignments. To address the students' individual needs, the project team realized that teachers must work with students at their incoming skill level to help them master state standards. PD focused on developing and administering common formative assessments and on using the assessment data to create individualized education plans for each student. Updating the individual education plans each quarter became part of the instructional program. To assist with this rapid transformation, the district used DoDEA funds to hire instructional coaches who modeled lessons and assisted with testing and planning. This model proved successful, and the district allocated funds to continue supporting facilitator positions at each school. The district is continuing the grant-funded strategy to identify research-based instructional resources such as computer-based curriculum supplements that address student needs identified by the assessments. In addition to gains in the percentage of students achieving math and science mastery levels, students met technology literacy standards in 2012—skills that will help students maintain the math and science gains regardless of where they attend school.

Project Name or Focus:
Improving Mathematics and Science Achievement for Mobile Military Children

Military Installation:
Lackland AFB

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,114

Manhattan-Ogden School District, KS (Manhattan-Ogden)

The Strategy Boosters report highlighted Manhattan-Ogden's project for its successful use of formative assessments in aligning an extended learning day program to students' needs. The DoDEA grant created an opportunity for Manhattan-Ogden to use data for informed decision-making. An additional benefit of the program is that families use the web-based programs with their children at home. This generated positive feedback from military families about the level of information available on student progress. The "Data-Driven Success" program is widely successful. Approximately 90 percent of students at participating elementary schools score at the proficient level or above on the 2010-2011 state assessment, a 30 percent increase over a two-year period. Manhattan-Ogden stressed the importance of using data and obtaining continuous feedback from all stakeholders, including families, to ensure that the program is meeting all students' needs.

Project Name or Focus:
Data Driven Success

Military Installation: Fort Riley

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 378

Oceanside Unified School District, CA (Oceanside)

Oceanside introduced two data-driven intervention programs to support reading development in Grades K-8. The intervention plan was structured to ensure that teachers were ready to use the student data; that benchmark results were provided regularly; and that data reviews included principals, coaches, and teachers to regularly improve instruction to meet student needs. This structured implementation and ongoing use of data helped Oceanside improve student reading achievement starting in the second year of the project.

Project Name or Focus:

Targeted Interventions for Pendleton Students (TIPS)

Military Installation:

Camp Pendleton

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 2,016

Prince George County Public Schools, VA (PG County)

This project enhanced an existing math program at the Moore Middle School by providing tutoring on base for military-connected students. In collaboration with the school liaison at Fort Lee, who helped to locate space and enroll students, PG County provided a convenient, personalized program to supply intervention services that met student needs. PG County reported that in the 2011-2012 school year, 40 students participated in the tutoring program. Students who stayed in the program for two years increased math achievement scores by an average of 19 percentage points, with one student improving 91 points. This improvement occurred despite changes in the 2012 assessment standards and average score declines across the state.

Project Name or Focus:

The Moore Math Project

Military Installation: Fort Lee

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 303



Support Structures to Address the Needs of Military-Connected Students and Their Families

All districts participating in the DoDEA Education Partnership Program Grants committed to support military-connected students. Many project goals focused on improving transitions for these students. Most grantees integrated new curriculum, materials, or processes activities specifically designed to address the unique situation of military-connected families. Without plans for fully integrating new initiatives into existing school programs, these innovations, however well designed, have less impact on overall student performance and are less likely to continue. The summaries below identify differentiated structures that helped teachers and staff recognize the social and emotional challenges and the academic difficulties that result from frequent school changes and parental deployment. Understanding student and family needs is vital in developing responses to the challenges experienced by military-connected students.

Chattahoochee County School District, GA (CCSD)

Silver Valley Unified School District, CA (Silver Valley)

Both of these grant projects included computer-based programs to support student advancement among their project strategies. Chattahoochee introduced AVID to help middle and high school students complete higher level courses. Silver Valley included APEX Learning courses to expand offerings for high school students in the rural community as well as to support credit recovery and AP completion. What both districts found, however, was that the key to implementing these supplemental support programs was not just integrating technology, but meeting students' more basic need to find time to participate. The low-tech supports that made these high-tech programs successful included providing transportation so students could access the programs after school, providing a trained teacher in a computer-equipped classroom so that students could select an online course period in their daily schedule, and including a summer school program open to all students to provide additional access to online courses.

CCSD

Project Name or Focus:

Transitional Education, Achievement & Mentoring (T.E.A.M.)

Military Installation: Fort Benning

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 220

SILVER VALLEY

Project Name or Focus:

Deepening and Expanding Learning Opportunities for Students

Military Installation: Fort Irwin

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,644

Fairbanks North Star School District, AK (Fairbanks)

The Fairbanks DoDEA projects incorporated many components to serve military-connected middle and high school students. One strategy cited by faculty and staff as changing the culture in the school was the Ignition⁷³ program, an interactive transition and mentorship program designed to proactively reach out to all students and provide transition support.

Project Name or Focus:

TRACKS Transitions, Academics, Career Knowledge and Social-Emotional Needs

Military Installation: Eielson AFB and Fort Wainwright

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 1,365

⁷³ A program developed by FOCUS Training, Milwaukee, WI. For more information see <http://transition.focustraining.com/ignition/what-is-ignition/>.

This strategy helped teachers see the need to support students' social and emotional well-being along with their academic learning. The project met its goal: (1) demonstrating success in improving English achievement scores, (2) increasing the percentage of the student body taking AP courses, and (3) boosting average SAT Reading scores. Based on the success of the DoDEA-funded program in the three high schools with the greatest percentage of military-connected students, the district expanded the program into all area high schools. The district also modified the first day of school for high school students to allow all freshmen and any other new students to participate in the signature school-year kick-off event of the program.

Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8, CO (FFC8)

WADA is a computer-based assessment program that helped introduce and integrate ongoing assessments into the overall academic culture. CWC focused on student supports that included hiring an "Integrationist" to assist with transition services for students and families and after-school activities for military-connected students. The data from WADA also informed transition services. The district conducted PD on the unique needs of military-connected students and their families. The evaluator noted that teacher feedback about the PD indicated that teachers found that the "Capturing Kids Hearts" program⁷⁴ fostered a culture shift in how teachers work with students because it provided tools for administrators, faculty, and staff to build positive, productive, and trusting relationships.

Project Name or Focus:

Connecting with Compassion (CWC) and Web-Based Adaptive Diagnostic Assessments (WADA)

Military Installation: Fort Carson, Schriever AFB, Peterson AFB, Cheyenne Mt AF Station, and U.S. Air Force Academy

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 2,874

Onslow County School District, NC (Onslow)

In addition to introducing new technology and math content, Onslow used DoDEA funds to develop a multi-faceted transitional counseling program that provides critical support for military-connected students. The support activities changed the culture of the schools by creating support services to enhance and supplement academic support. The project, recognized by the Military Child Education Coalition, played a strong role in building district awareness of military families' needs, and in raising military families' awareness about the services available to meet those needs. Two transition counselors conducted support groups, initiated community outreach activities, reinstated and coordinated the Student-to-Student (S2S) transition programs, and collected and disseminated resources to students and families. The transition counselors conducted an estimated 45 community outreach events that included family orientations, military family nights, and individual counseling sessions with families or students. As a result, participation in outreach events, counseling groups, and S2S programs increased in the target schools. For example, participation in the deployment support groups for elementary and middle school students grew from 400 in year one to over 1,000 in the final grant year.

Project Name or Focus:

Onslow Connect: Connecting Students to 21st Century Learning and Support Opportunities

Military Installation: Camp Lejeune, MCAS New River, Camp Geiger, and Camp Johnson

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 10,339

⁷⁴ For more information, see <http://flippengroup.com/education/ckh.html>.



San Diego United School District, CA (San Diego)

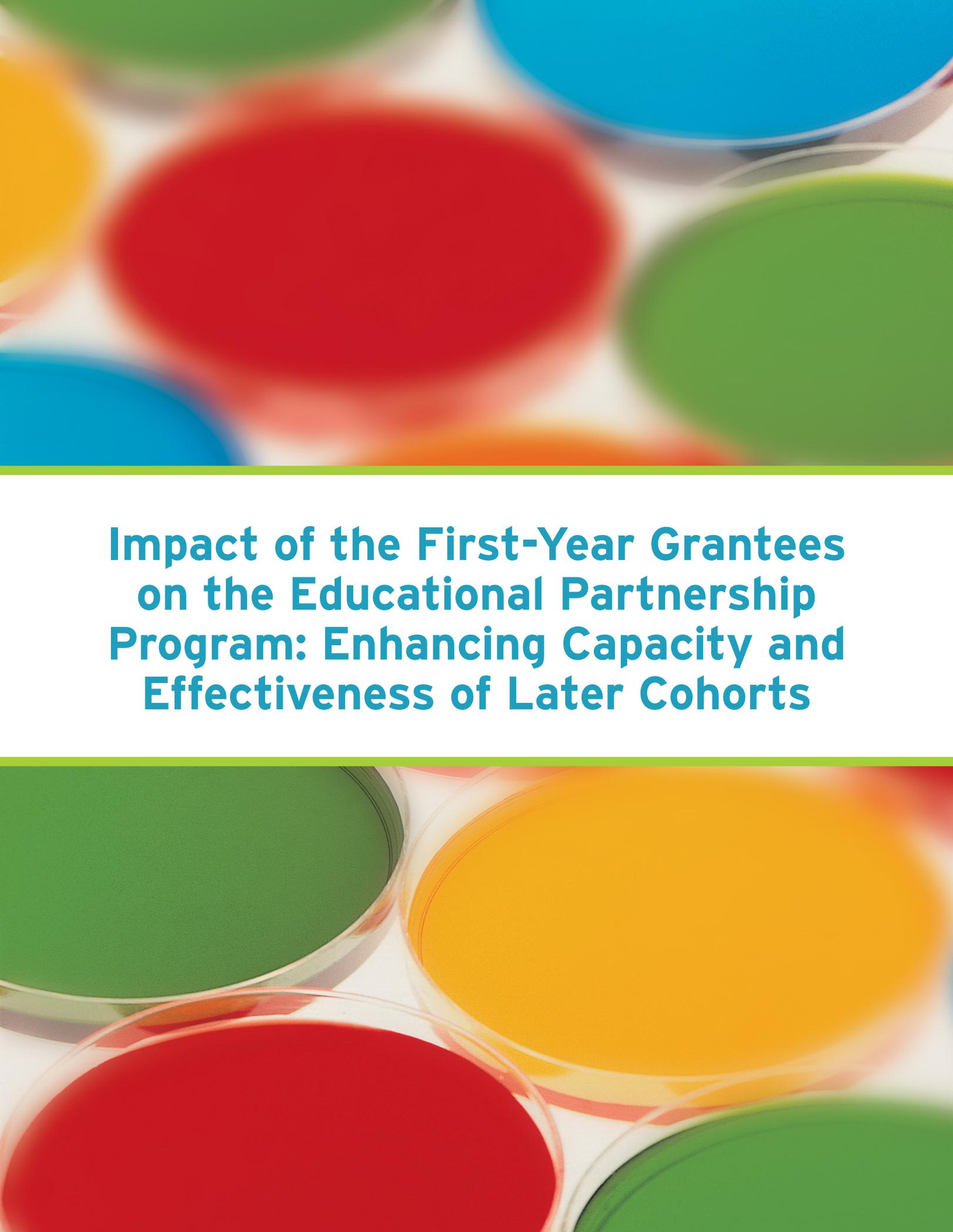
San Diego took a holistic approach to improve student achievement in eight schools that form a complete K-12 cluster. The schools implemented strategies to improve math instruction and remediation while also focusing on strategies to support student social competence and school adjustment. Transition support included providing orientation and goal-setting exercises for incoming students; developing and deploying a “Risk of Retention Checklist” to screen, prioritize, and guide individualized interventions; providing in-school counseling and resources for military-connected students and their families; expanding participation in peer support programs (Student-2-Student and Junior Student-2-Student⁷⁵); and monitoring student support outcomes through proprietary and district-developed surveys. The most successful grant-funded initiatives, as noted by the evaluator, were the campus “Connections” spaces that served as resource centers for military families; changes to military-connected student enrollment practices; and the community partnerships between military families and the PTA, and between the school and the Military’s School Liaison Officer. The project helped shift the entire school culture toward support for all students, particularly military-connected students and families.

Project Name or Focus: Operation Student Success

Military Installation: NAS San Diego

Military-Connected Students, 2011-12: 3,183

⁷⁵ For more information see <http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/student-2-student>.

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several petri dishes containing agar. The agar is in various colors: red, blue, green, and yellow. The dishes are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping. The lighting is bright, creating soft shadows and highlights on the edges of the dishes.

**Impact of the First-Year Grantees
on the Educational Partnership
Program: Enhancing Capacity and
Effectiveness of Later Cohorts**

Impact of the First-Year Grantees on the Educational Partnership Program: Enhancing Capacity and Effectiveness of Later Cohorts

DoDEA has the honor and privilege of educating and serving our nation's school-aged military-connected children. DoDEA's Educational Partnership Program provides critical support to military-connected local educational agencies that have positively impacted student achievement and eased the challenges that students face due to their parents' military service. As this report demonstrates, the Educational Partnership Program's first-year grantees successfully met a number of challenges and implemented projects that will have a lasting positive effect on 87,300 military-connected students.

At the program level, DoDEA and the Evaluation Technical Assistance Center (ETAC) identified a number of common challenges that the first-year grantees face, and efforts have been made to implement effective remedies. In particular, DoDEA and ETAC addressed two issues faced by the first-year grantees, and as a result, later grantees have reaped the benefits.

First, many grantees did not possess the knowledge or ability to collect, evaluate, and report their project data. As noted earlier, ETAC provided a wide range of technical assistance to grantees to help them meet this challenge. For later grantees, DoDEA instituted several changes that enhanced grantees' evaluation capacity, including (1) modification of the grant requirements to require an external evaluator to assist with data collection, analysis, and reporting; and (2) enhancement of new grantee "kickoff" activities to include an expanded session on evaluation implementation and requirements. As an example, later grantees received technical assistance on methods for disaggregating data and reporting outcomes for military-connected students immediately after winning their award.

Second, grantees faced several common but unanticipated challenges that compromised their ability to fully implement the programs in their first grant year. Issues outside the grantees' control caused implementation delays, including technology incompatibility, professional development plans that conflicted with existing schedules, and project plans that included multiple unrelated goals and strategies that were not fully developed at the time the projects began. DoDEA addressed these issues by including more prescriptive objectives in the Request for Proposals; having ETAC provide a webinar on proposal requirements for prospective grantees; limiting the number of goals each project should address; and convening the kickoff meeting for new grantees earlier in the school year to provide grantees sufficient time to put implementation procedures in place. As a result of DoDEA's modifications, later cohorts were more successful in launching their projects, and they were able to more effectively demonstrate their success.

Building on the knowledge gained from the first-year grantees, the Educational Partnership Program has since awarded three-year grants to an additional 142 military-connected LEAs in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Collectively, the Program has impacted nearly 260,000 military-connected students and improved educational opportunities in over 1,000 schools. Grantees in the later cohorts have benefitted from the innumerable lessons learned in the program's first year. Overall, grantees' project implementation has accelerated; therefore, students have earlier access to the full benefits of the program, and grantees' project goals are laser-focused, opening the door to greater success.

* Expanded profile available in Chapter 2.



**APPENDIX:
2009 DoDEA Partnership
Grantees**



2009 DoDEA Partnership Grantees (n=44)

Grantee	State	Military Installation(s) Served	Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12
Academy School District 20*	CO	Fort Carson, Schriever AFB, Peterson AFB, Air Force Academy, and Falcon AFB	4,317
Bethel School District*	WA	Joint Base Lewis-McChord	325
Bryan County Schools	GA	Fort Stewart Military Reservation and Hunter Army Air Field	553
Cache Public Schools	OK	Fort Sill	410
Carthage Central School District	NY	Fort Drum	1,516
Chattahoochee County School District	GA	Fort Benning	220
Clarksville - Montgomery County School System*	TN	Fort Campbell	6,444
Clover Park School District*	WA	Joint Base Lewis-McChord	4,710
Clovis Municipal Schools	NM	Cannon AFB	659
Comal Independent School District*	TX	Joint Base San Antonio	253
Coronado Unified School District	CA	Naval Base Coronado	1,132
Craven County Schools	NC	MCAS Cherry Point, Camp Lejeune, and MCAS New River Air Station	2,138
Cumberland County Schools	NC	Fort Bragg and Pope AFB	1,563
Derby Unified School District 260	KS	McConnell AFB	230
El Paso Independent School District	TX	Fort Bliss	2,175
Elgin Public Schools	OK	Fort Sill	354
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	AK	Eielson AFB and Fort Wainwright	1,365
Falcon School District 49*	CO	Fort Carson**	1,715

* Expanded profile available in Chapter 2.

** Fountain-Fort Carson received two separate grants, bringing the total number of grants to 45.

Grantee	State	Military Installation(s) Served	Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12
Fort Sam Houston Independent School District*	TX	Fort Sam Houston, Camp Bullis, and Joint Base San Antonio	1,505
Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8**	CO	Fort Carson, Schriever AFB, Peterson AFB, Cheyenne Mt AF Station, and Air Force Academy	2,874
Geary County Unified School District 475	KS	Fort Riley	4,261
Hardin County Schools	KY	Fort Knox	2,156
Harford County Public Schools*	MD	Aberdeen Proving Ground	262
Harrison School District 2	CO	Ft. Carson, Schriever AFB and Peterson AFB	401
Hawaii Department of Education*	HI	Schofield Barracks, Wheeler Airfield, and Wahiawa Naval Station	4,276
Hopewell City Public Schools	VA	Fort Lee	67
Indian River Central School District*	NY	Fort Drum	1,437
Judson Independent School District*	TX	Joint Base San Antonio	484
Lackland Independent School District	TX	Lackland AFB	1,114
Lawton Public Schools	OK	Fort Sill	7,041
Long Beach School District	MS	NCB Gulfport and Keesler AFB	107
Manhattan-Ogden Unified School District 383	KS	Fort Riley	378
Morongo Unified School District	CA	MCB 29 Palms	2,576
Muscogee County School District	GA	Fort Benning	1,393
Northside Independent School District*	TX	Lackland AFB, Kelly AFB and Joint Base San Antonio	1,182
Oceanside Unified School District	CA	Camp Pendleton	2,016
Onslow County School System	NC	Camp Lejeune, MCAS New River, Camp Geiger, and Camp Johnson	10,339
Prince George County Public Schools	VA	Fort Lee	303

* Expanded profile available in Chapter 2.

** Fountain-Fort Carson received two separate grants, bringing the total number of grants to 45.

Grantee	State	Military Installation(s) Served	Military-Connected Student Population, 2011-12
Randolph Field Independent School District	TX	Joint Base San Antonio and Brooks AFB	1,005
San Diego Unified School District	CA	NAS San Diego	3,183
Silver Valley Unified School District	CA	Fort Irwin	1,644
Tucson Unified School District	AZ	Davis-Monthan AFB	485
Vernon Parish School District	LA	Fort Polk	2,400
Waynesville R-VI School District*	MO	Fort Leonard Wood	4,320

* Expanded profile available in Chapter 2.

