



Touching Base

A Quarterly U.S. Department of Education Newsletter for the Military Community

"We've seen schools making changes to make academic excellence a little more achievable for military kids."

—Michelle Obama

—Joining Forces Special, Interview on Disney Channel
Nov., 11, 2011

The First Lady on the Disney Channel

First lady Michelle Obama teamed up with China Anne McClain and brothers Doug and Chris Brochu, three young Disney stars from military families, to encourage young people to support families of those who serve. Mrs. Obama appeared on the Disney Channel Nov. 11, 2011, talking about helping military families and urging young people to get to know kids from military families. The three Disney stars shared their stories. Chris and Doug Brochu's father spent 25 years in the Army, including time as a Green Beret, paratrooper, diver, and medic. McClain's uncle serves in the Air Force in Germany. Visit <http://kids.aol.com/2011/11/10/join-forces-with-first-lady-michelle-obama-and-disney-channel/> to learn more.

Departments of Education and Defense Announce Learning Registry

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Defense announced on Nov. 7, 2011, the launch of the Learning Registry. Designed to improve the quality and availability of learning resources, the Learning Registry is an open source technical system for facilitating the exchange of data and an open community of resource creators, consumers, and others in the field. "The Learning Registry addresses a real problem in education, by bridging the silos that prevent educators from sharing valuable information and resources," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "The Registry also allows content developers, curriculum coordinators, principals, counselors, and everyone else who supports good teaching in the classroom to benefit from the combined knowledge of the field." The project was made possible by a \$2.6 million investment, with the departments of Education and Defense contributing \$1.3 million each to the effort. The launch is a milestone in the effort to more effectively share information about learning resources among a broad set of stakeholders in the education community. To learn more or to join the community discussion group and mailing list, visit <http://www.learningregistry.org/>.

The Department of Education's Veterans and Military Family Members: Proud Service to Our Country in the Past, Present, and Future

In honor of Veterans Day, the Department hosted an event that honored all employees and their families who have served in the military. A Wall of Honor on the first floor of the headquarters building displays veterans' photos, their branches of service, length of service, and military occupational specialties. John Manahan, veteran and special assistant to the deputy secretary, offered opening remarks for the event. Keynote speakers were Martha Kanter, Department of Education under secretary, and Glenn Kunkel, a speaker from the Wounded Warrior Project. Kanter

recounted her experience of serving this year as the reviewing officer at Naval Station Great Lakes as 960 new sailors completed their boot camp. She stated, "We have a sacred trust with those who wear the uniform of the United States, and on Veterans Day, Americans everywhere join in commemorating that special bond." For teaching and learning resources about Veterans Day, visit: http://free.ed.gov/keywords.cfm?keyword_id=985.

Workshop on the Scientific Study of Military Children

From Nov. 17 through Nov. 18, 2011, the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) hosted a workshop entitled "The Scientific Study of Military Children," at the Westin Georgetown in Washington, D.C. CNA is a nonprofit research organization that serves the public interest by providing in-depth analysis and results-oriented solutions to help government leaders choose the best course of action in setting policy and managing operations. Eric Waldo, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Programs in ED's Office of the Secretary, was one of the keynote speakers. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together experts to help build and sustain a research agenda pertaining to the development and well-being of children whose parents have served in the military in the Global War on Terror. Go to <http://www.cna.org/news/releases/2011-11-15> for more information about the workshop.

Space Station Astronauts Connect Live With D.C. Students for International Education Week

On Nov. 23, 2011, a special downlink from the International Space Station was arranged so that 150 students from some of the Washington, D.C. area's middle and high schools could experience space exploration with the Expedition 25 space station crew. Hosted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Education (ED) the event was held in ED's Barnard Auditorium in recognition of International Education Week (IEW). This year's IEW theme was "Inspiring Students Locally to Succeed Globally." Each of the schools asked to participate has a high concentration of students from military families. The students had the opportunity to hear about living and working in space from International Space Station Commander Mike Fossum. Fossum noted that the sacrifices of military life are sometimes similar to life as an astronaut since both can involve long periods of time away from family for either training or actual missions. NASA Associate Administrator of Education and former astronaut Leland Melvin welcomed the students and emphasized that studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in school could lead to many exciting career options. DoDEA Director Marilee Fitzgerald addressed the students and their teachers and spoke of how our varied life experiences can teach us as much as classroom learning. International Education Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State. For more information about this event, visit <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/students-connect-with-astronaut.html#>.

Department of Defense Education Activity Awards Nearly \$65 Million in Grants for Public Schools Serving Military Families

In fiscal year (FY) 2011, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)'s Educational Partnership awarded nearly \$65 million for 57 grants to support military-connected schools. The purpose of this grant program is to enhance student achievement, providing support for quality programs and strategies designed to better the academic achievement and learning outcomes of children of military members. An additional \$10 million was used to fund virtual learning projects in several local education agencies (LEAs) and programs in Hawaii.

Below is more information excerpted from DoDEA's website at <http://www.dodea.edu/home/>.

"The grant program provides resources to military-connected LEAs to develop and implement projects that are designed to:

- Promote student achievement in the core curricular areas.
- Ease the challenges that military students face due to transitions and deployments.
- Support the unique social and emotional needs of military students.
- Promote distance learning opportunities.
- Improve educator professional development.
- Enhance and integrate technology.
- Encourage parental involvement."

"DoDEA answered the call outlined in the Presidential report, "Strengthening Our Military Families," to leverage support to expand access to Advanced Placement math and science courses for the children of military families. Nearly \$10 million in grant funds have been awarded to the National Math Science Initiative (NMSI) for its Initiative for Military Families (IMF) program. IMF introduces rigorous math, science, and English classes in military-connected public high schools through the Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program (APTIP)."

"Since 2008, DoDEA has awarded \$180 million in grants to over 100 military-connected LEAs. These three-year projects impact nearly 230,000 students from military families and more than 620,000 students overall."

Free Online Tutoring for Service Members and Their Families

[Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families](http://www.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/08/family-focus-friday-tutor-com/) is an online tutoring and homework help program sponsored by the Department of Defense (DoD) that allows eligible service members and their families to get 24/7 assistance and support on a wide range of subjects, from elementary school concepts to advanced high school coursework. If you are active duty or on active duty in the National Guard or Reserve in a deployed status (or even a DoD civilian in a deployed status), you and your family are eligible for the program. No special hardware or software is needed. As long as you have Internet access, you can use Tutor.com anywhere in the world! Go to <http://www.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/08/family-focus-friday-tutor-com/> to learn more. Other resources for military families can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families>.

Readmission Requirements for Service Members

For service members whose college education was interrupted when they were called to active duty and who want to return to the same schools they left, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/quid/readmission.html>. This website tells about requirements schools must meet to make readmission less disruptive to the lives of service members.

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