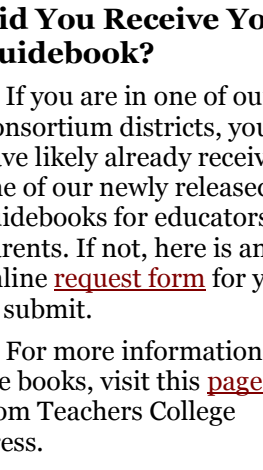


Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools

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Did You Receive Your Guidebook?

If you are in one of our Consortium districts, you have likely already received one of our newly released guidebooks for educators or parents. If not, here is an online [request form](#) for you to submit.

For more information on the books, visit this [page](#) from Teachers College Press.

Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

Looking for Past Issues?

All of our past issues are archived on our [website](#).

Upcoming Events:

Living in the New Normal:

The Military Child Education Coalition will hold its workshop, Living in the New Normal Practicum: Helping Children Thrive Through Good and Challenging Times on Jan. 31 at the San Luis Rey MCFTB Family Readiness Center Building, 1795 Barnett Circle, Camp Pendleton, CA 92055. The session begins with registration at 8 a.m. Click on this [link](#), click training and choose Living in the New Normal: Practicum, Camp Pendleton. Register by **Jan. 18**.

Student Video Contest:

The California Health Services Authority is challenging high school students across the state to create a 60-second public service announcement to prevent suicide and change opinions about mental illness. Winners of the Directing Change Student Video Contest will receive \$1,000, a matching cash prize for their school, and be recognized at an awards ceremony. Submissions are due **March 1**. Visit the [Directing Change](#) website for contest rules and information.

Camp COPE: This one-day camp helps military children deal with the effects of war, deployments and the sacrifices they make every day. Children are provided with age-appropriate activities and group interventions in small groups with peers who have had similar experiences. Camp COPE will be held at Camp Pendleton on **Feb. 9**. Click [here](#) for more information, including registration details.

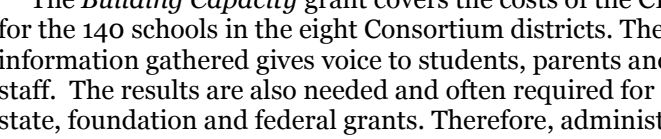
Questions, Comments or to Unsubscribe: e-mail us at raastor@usc.edu

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Districts Across State Prepare for California Healthy Kids Survey Administration

Over the next couple of months, districts across California, including those in the *Building Capacity* Consortium, will be administering the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), along with companion surveys for parents and school staff.

Oceanside Unified School District will be the first to give the survey during the week of Feb. 4. Others will follow throughout February and March. See below for the current schedule as we know it, along with the names and e-mail addresses for staff members handling any questions related to the CHKS.



The CHKS is administered every other year in every school district in California, providing policymakers and educators with valuable information on school climate and student trends regarding exposure to drugs, violence, and bullying, as well as protective factors that can improve conditions for student learning. The anonymous survey is administered by WestEd for the California Department of Education.

The *Building Capacity* grant covers the costs of the CHKS for the 140 schools in the eight Consortium districts. The information gathered gives voice to students, parents and staff. The results are also needed and often required for state, foundation and federal grants. Therefore, administering the survey has the potential to bring in new revenue to schools and districts.

"We urge the districts to have as many parents and staff members as possible complete the surveys this time to make the response rates for each school representative of their ideas and views," says Dr. Ron Astor, principal investigator on the project.

Improving Schools for Military Students

In cooperation with *Building Capacity*, the California Department of Education and WestEd developed a supplementary military-connected schools survey module, which was made available to all California schools for the first time in 2011.

The module allows officials and researchers to compare health, behavior and school experiences between military and non-military students.

This year, for the first time, the core survey for all students in grades 5, 7, 9 and 11 will include a question that asks students whether they have a father, mother or caretaker currently in the military.

This question will give all California schools and state policymakers better data on the proportion of students statewide who are military dependents and how their needs or experiences in school differ from those of non-military students.

In addition, schools in the *Building Capacity* Consortium will be able to see if there are improvements in outcomes and better plan for programs or services that best meet the needs of military-connected students.

The CHKS is just one piece the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey. The system also includes the California School Parent Survey and the California School Climate Survey, which is taken by school staff. All three components help schools meet the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Click on this [link](#) for more information on the CHKS, the parent survey and the staff survey.

CHKS Schedule

Week of Feb. 4: Oceanside Unified School District; Contact Dan Daris, dan.daris@oside.us

Early Feb.: Bonsall Union School District; Contact Diane Lillibridge, diane.lillibridge@bonsallusd.com

Week of Feb. 25:

-Escondido Union High School District; Contact Barbara Gauthier, gauthier@euhsd.k12.ca.us

-Temecula Valley Unified School District; Contact Diana Damon-White, ddamon-white@tvusd.k12.ca.us

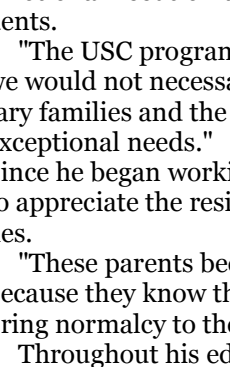
-Fallbrook Union High School District; Contact James Yahr, yyahr@fuhisd.net

Week of March 4: Fallbrook Union Elementary School District, Contact Bill Billingsley, bbillingsley@fuesd.k12.ca.us

Week of March 11: Escondido Union School District, Contact Tracy Schmidt, trschmidt@eusd.org

Week of March 18: Chula Vista Elementary School District, Contact Melissa Minas, melissa.minas@cvesd.org

Spotlight On: Superintendent Edward Nelson



As superintendent of the Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD), Edward Nelson says he is always looking for new opportunities to enhance the success of every student.

One of those opportunities has been participating in the Building Capacity Consortium.

"This program has helped to provide valuable resources for military families and their students," Nelson says. "It has been particularly beneficial for those new to the district, providing targeted information on resources available in the Escondido community."

A resident of Escondido since 1978, With a M. A. in Educational Administration from Azusa Pacific University as well as a B.A. from Humboldt State University, Nelson first joined the 8,000-student district as principal of Escondido High School in 1994. He moved to the district office in 1999 where he first served as assistant superintendent for educational services, followed by three years as assistant superintendent for human resources. In 2005, he was appointed superintendent.

Nelson is also active and has leadership roles in a number of professional organizations including the Escondido Chamber of Commerce and the Escondido Community Services Commission.

As part of the Consortium, EUHSD has been able to expand training opportunities for teachers and staff on the unique challenges faced by children of military families. The district has also received assistance with the California Healthy Kids Survey, financial support for services from Palomar Family Counseling and help for students going through the college application process.

"This individual guidance helps to ensure students and their families can maneuver through the college application maze, maximizing the opportunities available to utilize a GI Bill or veteran's benefits," Nelson says. "Every child, especially the children of individuals who have served our country, deserves a chance to have the education they need to make their hopes and dreams a reality."

Spotlight On: Superintendent Larry Perondi

Since becoming superintendent of the Oceanside Unified School District (OUSD) in 2007, Larry Perondi has led the district through some significant changes, including a \$195 million facility improvement program and steady increases in student achievement.

Under his leadership, the district has entered into an agreement with California State University San Marcos that will guarantee admission for any and all students who meet requirements, beginning with the OUSD graduating class of 2017. The district's Academic Performance Index has also been climbing, with Ivey Ranch Elementary School clearing the 900 benchmark in the fall of 2011.

Perondi is responsible for bringing the Simon Family Foundation scholarship program into the district. The foundation awards full scholarships to 20 OUSD students annually, with the district being one of only four regions in the country to participate in this unique scholarship program.

Participating in the *Building Capacity* project is one of the ways the district focuses on the academic and social-emotional needs of its significant proportion of military students.

"The USC program has put expertise at our disposal that we would not necessarily have," Perondi says. "These military families and the children of these military families have exceptional needs."

Since he began working in the district, he says he has grown to appreciate the resiliency and dedication of military families.

"These parents become incredibly involved very quickly because they know they have limited time," he says, "They bring normalcy to their lives as quickly as they can."

Throughout his education career, Perondi has worked as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, middle and high school principal and district level administrator. He serves on the board of directors for Junior Achievement, the San Diego County Youth and Family Services Commission, and the San Diego County Achievement Gap Task Force.

In 2005, he was named both Administrator of the Year and District Management Employee of the Year in the Sweetwater Union High School District.



Featured Resource: MyMilitaryLife App



Military spouses now have their own helpful app to age the busy and often changing aspects of their lives.

[MyMilitaryLife](#) was created by the [National Military Family Association](#) and guides families through topics such as going back to school, planning for a deployment or transitioning out of the military. The app includes to-do lists, due-date reminders and announcements of new programs.

[MyMilitaryLife](#) can be downloaded from iTunes or Google Play. There is also an [online portal](#).

Headlines and Resources

We regularly feature stories, reports and resources related to military children on our website. Check back often for new additions, such as these:

- The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* [reported](#) on a proposal in the Texas legislature that would allow military children 10 days of excused absence from school when their parent is about to be deployed or has returned home from deployment.
- The *Jersey Journal* featured a [story](#) on high school athletes in Hoboken who collected more than 180 holiday gifts for families of U.S. military personnel serving overseas. The toys were donated to representatives of the Army National Guard for its Family Support Program.
- [USC Telehealth](#) is currently offering 12 free counseling sessions to military personnel, veterans, and their immediate families in Los Angeles County. Those interested can mention the Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families to receive free, confidential services. Call (866) 740-6502 or register for an appointment online. Click [here](#) or the program flyer.
- Children's Institute, Inc. is beginning a [new program](#) to treat children of military families living in Los Angeles, particularly those with family members returning from deployment to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. A grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) will allow the institute and its partner agencies to deliver trauma treatment to nearly 3,000 children, with a special focus on the military population.