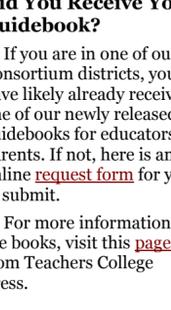


Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools

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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:

The Family Readiness Express has another school visit scheduled for this fall. The vehicle will visit **Wolf Canyon Elementary** in Chula Vista on Dec. 17-18. The hours for each of the visits will be from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

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CARE Youth Project in Escondido Showing Promising Results

Miles away from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Naval Base San Diego, the Escondido Union School District doesn't serve a large military population.

So when the district became part of the *Building Capacity* project, leaders there took a slightly different approach to creating supportive environments for the military-connected students they knew were in their schools.

"We have social workers in the schools," explains Kimberly Israel, the director of the CARE Youth Project for the district. "We build their capacity to meet the needs of any individuals, whether they are a military family or not."

CARE stands for Collaborative Agency Resources for Escondido and focuses on reducing violence, bullying, chronic absenteeism, and drug and alcohol use among students as well as forming partnerships with community agencies to provide mental health and other services to students at risk.

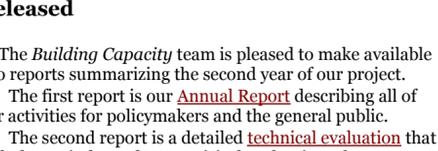
The district has directed its funds from the *Building Capacity* grant toward providing training to all schools in bullying prevention and implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

Being part of *Building Capacity*, Israel says, has allowed the district to "really understand the unique needs" of military families.

The data show that the district's efforts are having positive results. These include an 11 percent increase since 2008-09 in the percentage of 7th graders saying they feel connected to school, a 42 percent decline since 2009-10 in the number of days middle school students were suspended for using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, and a 39 percent drop in the average number of days students were absent from school.

The district has also used its funding from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to hire a school social worker who will work with homeless students, foster youth and military-connected children. This new Project SUCCESS support specialist, Amanda Hipper, has also worked as one of *Building Capacity's* external field instructors.

"Our schools just feel different," Israel says about the district's work to improve school climate. "It's been a remarkable journey."



Amanda Hipper outside the district's Project SUCCESS Resource Center, which serves military-connected families, homeless students and foster care youth.

Building Capacity Annual Reports Released

The *Building Capacity* team is pleased to make available two reports summarizing the second year of our project.

- The first report is our [Annual Report](#) describing all of our activities for policymakers and the general public.
- The second report is a detailed [technical evaluation](#) that includes an independent empirical evaluation of programs and training components developed by the Building Capacity Consortium during Year Two of the project. It documents activities designed to improve the social and educational outcomes for military students.

For a complete list of our reports, click [here](#).

Spotlight On: Dr. Dale Mitchell

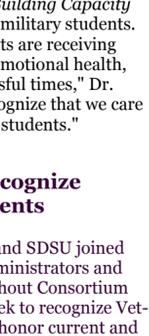
Dr. Dale Mitchell is the superintendent of the Fallbrook Union High School District, one of eight districts in the *Building Capacity* Consortium.

But that's not the only way he's connected to USC. In college, he played football for the USC Trojans, and then went on to a professional football career with the San Francisco 49ers.

Dr. Mitchell has spent more than 30 years as an educator. Before becoming a superintendent, he was a teacher and a high school principal. His years in education have helped him develop his expertise in helping and supporting students in achieving academic success and fostering team work among teachers and district personnel.

In addition, he has demonstrated an ability to build trust within a school community and create "win-win" situations that benefit students, teachers, administrators, and district personnel. He is delighted to be part of *Building Capacity* and helping build supportive schools for military students.

"I'm proud of how our military students are receiving support in the areas of personal health, emotional health, and academic support during these stressful times," Dr. Mitchell says. "Our military students recognize that we care about their success as people, not just as students."

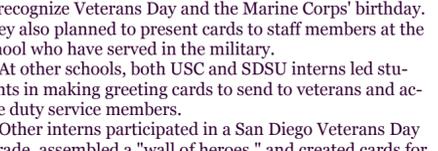


Building Capacity Schools Recognize Veterans Day with Special Events

Building Capacity interns from USC and SDSU joined with school administrators and parents throughout Consortium schools last week to recognize Veterans Day and honor current and past members of the military.

At Vail Elementary School in Temecula, for example, USC MSW intern Thomas Rocha worked with Principal Jona Hazlett to organize special activities for the school's weekly flag ceremony.

With the cooperation of Navy Musician 2nd Class Bryan Parman (left, with wife Lesley), a Vail parent who happens to play in the Navy Southwest Band, the ceremony featured a brass quintet. Two fifth graders also made special presentations—one on the history of Veterans Day and another on the Battle of Baltimore and the writing of the National Anthem.



Vail Elementary 5th grader Noah Garzon gives his speech on the Battle of Baltimore and the writing of the National Anthem.

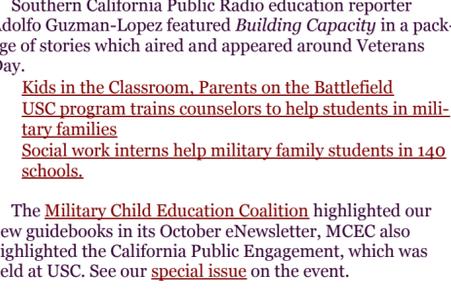
At Garrison Elementary in Oceanside, SDSU school psychology students David Martinez and Josh Griffith invited the Oceanside High School ROTC to present the color guard and exhibition drill at a special assembly. Then Nico Marcolongo, program manager for Operation Rebound at the Challenged Athletes Foundation, led a cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate the Marine Corps' birthday on Nov. 10. A Marine Corps veteran, Marcolongo works to provide post-rehabilitative support to American service members who have suffered permanent war-related physical injuries.

At Lincoln Middle School, also in Oceanside, SDSU students Laura Romo and Melissa Monteon hosted a breakfast to recognize Veterans Day and the Marine Corps' birthday. They also planned to present cards to staff members at the school who have served in the military.

At other schools, both USC and SDSU interns led students in making greeting cards to send to veterans and active duty service members.

Other interns participated in a San Diego Veterans Day parade, assembled a "wall of heroes," and created cards for veterans in nursing homes.

Projects like these demonstrate that there are a variety of creative ways to honor members of the military and create military-friendly environments at school.



Military-connected children at Vail Elementary drew pictures during their lunch break.

Featured Resource: Operation Homefront's Military Child of the Year



Operation Homefront is now accepting nominations for its annual Military Child of the Year awards. The nomination period closes on Dec. 15 at 11:45 p.m.

Recipients representing each service branch will be honored at an event in Washington on April 11, 2013. The award recipients also receive a laptop computer and a \$5,000 cash prize.

Visit the [Military Child of the Year](#) website to learn more about the annual award and eligibility requirements.

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:

Southern California Public Radio education reporter Adolfo Guzman-Lopez featured *Building Capacity* in a package of stories which aired and appeared around Veterans Day.

- [Kids in the Classroom. Parents on the Battlefield](#)
- [USC program trains counselors to help students in military families](#)
- [Social work interns help military family students in 140 schools.](#)

The [Military Child Education Coalition](#) highlighted our new guidebooks in its October eNewsletter, MCEC also highlighted the California Public Engagement, which was held at USC. See our [special issue](#) on the event.

Click [here](#) for the November/December issue of the Academic Anchor, the newsletter of the Navy Region Southwest's school liaison officers. Scroll down to find the newsletter.