



Building Capacity to Create Highly Supportive Military-Connected School Districts Annual Report-Year 3

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Building Capacity to Create Highly Supportive Military-Connected School Districts
Department of Defense Education Activity, Grant #HE1254-10-1-0041
Ron Astor, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Rami Benbenishty, Ph.D., and Marleen Wong, Ph.D., Co-Investigators



The *Building Capacity* project is a consortium involving the University of Southern California and eight military-connected school districts in San Diego and Riverside counties:

- Bonsall Union School District, Superintendent Justin Cunningham
- Chula Vista Elementary School District, Superintendent Francisco Escobedo
- Escondido Union High School District, Superintendent Steve Boyle
- Escondido Union School District, Superintendent Jennifer Walters
- Fallbrook Union Elementary School District, Superintendent Candace Singh
- Fallbrook Union High School District, Superintendent Dale Mitchell
- Oceanside Unified School District, Superintendent Larry Perondi
- Temecula Valley Unified School District, Superintendent Tim Ritter

The views expressed in this report are those of the Building Capacity research team, based at the University of Southern California, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Consortium school districts and schools, collaborating agencies, and the Department of Defense Education Activity.

For information about this report, please contact Dr. Ron Astor at rastor@usc.edu.

This Year 3 report was written by Linda Jacobson, editor and writer for the Building Capacity project in close collaboration with the PI, co-investigators and the Building Capacity USC team. The cover photos feature members of the Consortium participating in Military Social Work Awareness Day at a San Diego Padres home game. The California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers organized the event to honor programs working on behalf of military families.

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Executive Summary

Building Capacity to Create Highly Supportive Military-Connected School Districts (Building Capacity) is a partnership between the University of Southern California and eight civilian school districts in San Diego and Riverside counties. The project is housed in the Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services within the School of Social Work at USC.

This report focuses on the third year of a four-year, \$7.6 million grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). The grant supports the districts' efforts to improve school environments for children from military families. The grant (#HE1254-10-1-0041) is part of DoDEA's partnership initiative to better support military children attending public schools.

The districts in the Consortium are Bonsall Union, Chula Vista Elementary, Escondido Union Elementary, Escondido Union High, Fallbrook Union Elementary, Fallbrook Union High, Oceanside Unified, and Temecula Valley Unified. Within these districts are a total of 140 schools serving roughly 117,000 students. Overall, about 10 percent of the students in these districts are military children. But the proportion of military children ranges from less than 10 percent at some schools to nearly 100 percent at schools located on the military installation, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

The Building Capacity Consortium works to raise awareness among public school educators regarding the educational and social-emotional needs of military children, as well as to equip educators and other practitioners working in schools with the knowledge and resources necessary to support these students. The Building Capacity team also works to improve educational policies and practices that affect all military students by advocating at the state and national levels.

Each year, the educators and researchers involved in Building Capacity have learned more about how repeated transitions into new schools, parents or siblings on deployment and high stress levels in the home can stand in the way of military students being successful in school. But we also see many inspiring examples of how schools can support military children and parents, connect them to community resources and provide a sense of stability. We have also widened our view to focus on the additional challenges thousands of families are now facing as soldiers return home from the war, reintegrate into their families, switch to civilian careers, or prepare for new assignments in the military.

This report highlights our ongoing efforts to prepare future school professionals—social workers, psychologists and counselors—to recognize military students' unique needs and to foster positive qualities in students such as strength, resilience and persistence. While the issue of sustainability is discussed in a separate section, the topic is also addressed in many other places throughout the text since this has been a significant focus in Year 3 and now in Year 4.

Major events that occurred in Year 3 include the California Public Engagement gathering at USC, the dissemination of our four guidebooks for educators and parents and a special recognition and ceremony at a San Diego Padres ballgame. Building Capacity also continues to have influence well beyond the eight Consortium districts, as evidenced by the multiple requests for presentations at other universities both in the U.S. and internationally.

This executive summary provides a brief overview of the multiple components of the project.

Graduate-Level Students in Military-Connected Schools

This section describes changes that took effect in Year 3 to strengthen the training program for USC's MSW students and to lay the foundation for the focus on military-connected students and schools to be an ongoing part of the training for MSW students. The focus on military-connected schools is now integrated into a required course for all USC students preparing to become school social workers, meaning the accomplishments and the intentions of Building Capacity will continue beyond the end of the grant.

As in previous years, we also present information on the interns from the two universities involved in Building Capacity—USC and San Diego State University (SDSU). Based on an internet-based survey, we describe how the interns devoted their time in Consortium schools. The interns spent most of their time addressing issues of school attendance and academic performance. They met with students individually and in groups, and also organized school-wide events.

Both the interns and their external field instructors agree that the interns are more competent at using interpersonal skills and empathizing with the challenges of military-connected students and less skilled at applying research to their practice.

We also highlight some of the special projects and programs implemented by the interns throughout the year, such as helping students with anti-bullying efforts and sharing positive messages during daily announcements.

California Healthy Kids Survey

In this section, we summarize the results of the 2013 administration of the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and compare them with responses from 2011—the first year that CHKS included the Military-Connected School Module. This youth health risk and behavior monitoring instrument is administered in all schools in California and is the means by which we are tracking outcomes among military-connected students compared to their nonmilitary peers.

In general, the results show decreases in the major areas covered by the survey, such as substance use, victimization and involvement with weapons. But they also show little

change in how students perceive the climate of their schools, as measured with their agreement or disagreement with statements such as: “At my school there is a teacher or adult who tells me when I do a good job,” and “I feel like I am part of this school.”

CHKS also provides the perspectives of educators and other staff members on school climate issues and areas of need among students. Staff members say that their schools are supportive and welcoming, but are lacking in providing students with adequate counseling and support services.

Staff members also think their schools give students equal opportunities to succeed. And compared to 2011, there is an increase in staff members saying that students have multiple opportunities to participate in enrichment or extracurricular activities.

In this section, we also provide an update on efforts to merge the CHKS data with school and district-level data from the California Department of Education. This combined database will allow researchers and educators to identify the relationship between school climate factors and students’ academic performance.

Building Evidence and Addressing Students’ Needs

This section of the report focuses on our increased efforts to evaluate the services and programs that have been provided to the schools as part of our project. The evaluations highlighted this year are Because Nice Matters, an anti-bullying program in the Temecula Valley Unified School District (TVUSD), and Learning Together, a peer-tutoring initiative used in the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District (FUESD). Evaluations of both of these programs show that there are enough positive results for the districts to continue with implementation and expansion.

This area of the report also describes workshops delivered at high schools and provides an update on changes that have occurred with intervention programs we have discussed in past reports, including Partners at Learning at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) and the school-based Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS) program. We also discuss grant proposals that our team has worked on—even if they weren’t funded—because they draw attention to the issues among students that still need to be addressed, such as substance use and mental health.

Building Awareness

A significant part of our work since the beginning of the grant has focused on informing both educators and the public about the lives of military children and on how schools can help lessen the burdens caused by multiple transitions, parental deployments and other stressful events.

During Year 3, we continued to use our monthly newsletters to highlight successful practices in our Consortium schools. Some of those efforts are highlighted in this

section. This area of the report also describes a social media campaign we ran in April to coincide with Month of the Military Child. Another major event this year was our Consortium's participation in Military Social Work Awareness Day at a San Diego Padres home game. The California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers organized the event to honor programs working on behalf of military families.

Publications

We continued in Year 3 to publish scientific articles related to military-connected students and to make presentations at multiple social work and education conferences. The year included several special conference sessions devoted to the issue of military-connected students—sessions that likely would not have been held without the influence of our project and the research related to it.

This section also discusses our extensive efforts to distribute our four guidebooks to school personnel and university faculty.

Working Toward Sustainability

With Year 4 of the grant now underway, we have increased our attention to creating and sustaining an infrastructure that can last after the grant expires. In addition to changes that have occurred in the USC internship, we also see SDSU and UCSD discussing ways to ensure that future students who are interested in the education field develop an awareness of military culture and acquire the skills to help military students be successful.

We are also seeing more Consortium districts hiring social workers or at least saying they recognize the need for these personnel.

Partnerships and Policy Efforts

As Building Capacity has developed, so have relationships with key partners both within our region as well as across the state, nation and even the world. Locally, our participation in the San Diego Military Family Collaborative has allowed us to share our model with more providers and practitioners serving military children and families, and at the same time has increased our awareness of services and programs available to schools.

We are also sharing what we have learned with many universities across the country and collaborating with researchers in several other countries—including Chile, France and Israel—in support of their efforts to implement various aspects of our project.

This section of the report also focuses on the Consortium's variety of efforts to influence and change education policy to be more responsive to the needs and shifting

circumstances of military children.

The year kicked off with the California Public Engagement, a gathering of leaders from across the education, military, faith-based and non-profit sectors. Over a two-day period at USC, the participants created action plans within and across sectors on how to improve services for military children and families and set timelines for accomplishing those goals.

We also note the progress that we have seen regarding California's implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, as well as action taking place in other states and at the national level to create individual student identifiers for military children.

Conclusion

This report shows that Building Capacity has developed into much more than an initiative involving eight school districts. It has helped to raise awareness both in California and across the country about the multiple challenges faced by military children and their parents. And it is demonstrating how universities can both train future educators and work in partnership with schools to address the needs of military students.

A more in-depth technical evaluation of Year 3, with detailed tables and data, is available on our website at this [link](#).

Graduate-Level Students in Military-Connected Schools

Year 3 was the second year in which graduate students from both USC and SDSU completed internships in the Consortium schools. There were 30 MSW students from USC, and at SDSU, there were 22 students in the fall and 23 in the spring.

Several significant changes to the training program for USC's MSW students were implemented during Year 3 in order to prepare for future sustainability of what has been accomplished through the grant. One of the major shifts was that every MSW student with a concentration in Family and Children learned about the needs of military students as part of the required 614 "Social Work Practice in School Settings" course. The purpose of this change—after two years of providing separate seminars on military-connected students—was to create an educational experience for USC students preparing to become school social workers that could be sustained after the Building Capacity grant expires.

Instead of just being a project or a special topic, the focus on military children has become a key piece of the school social work course—not just in San Diego but also at the main campus in Los Angeles and for students across the country who earn their degree through the Virtual Academic Center. This means that each year, students will not only receive credit for the course, but will also be qualified to work in military-connected schools. The course also brings the Family and Children concentration to USC's San Diego Academic Center (SDAC), where it did not exist before.

"Now that it is integrated into 614, this can hopefully take off on its own," says Diana Pineda, Building Capacity's San Diego project manager.

The school social work course is also part of a larger requirement for students that allows them to not only gain experience as interns in schools with military children, but also to become eligible for a Pupil Personnel Services Credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

To become eligible, students are first required to obtain a Certificate of Clearance from the Commission and undergo a fingerprinting process. These procedures were not part of the internship in Years 1 and 2, so it was not surprising that the Year 3 students experienced some confusion over the process.

Preparing professionals to address the needs of military children has also been a priority at SDSU, where school social work, school counseling and school psychology students attended seminars throughout the fall that included guest speakers on military culture, the work of school liaison officers, and information on the Interstate Compact. During the spring, the students dedicated their seminar time to planning and organizing an event called Showcasing Work with Military-Connected Students. Attended by over 100 people, the event featured poster presentations, a guest speaker, and a slideshow of



SDSU students showcase their work.

the programs and activities the interns implemented in the schools. We covered the event in our [May newsletter](#).

Discussions over how to sustain the training program at SDSU once the DoDEA grant expires are taking place, and ideas such as creating a senior year certificate program are being considered.

The participation of SDSU also shows that Building Capacity has developed a training and internship model that any university can implement.

Interns' Activities

While it was a challenge to blend training programs that previously had been delivered over a two-day period into an ongoing course, there were also several benefits to integrating information on military students and culture. One advantage is that particular activities and intervention programs within the schools—such as FOCUS—could be given as assignments. The USC students responded especially well to the idea of holding school-wide events to celebrate military culture and recognize military children and families. Several students organized events around holidays such as [Veteran's Day](#) and included members from the military community.

- 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.
- 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, which also featured a guest speaker.
- At Lincoln Middle School, also in Oceanside, SDSU students Laura Romo and Melissa Monteon hosted a breakfast to recognize Veteran's Day and the Marine Corps' birthday. They also presented cards to staff members at the school who have served in the military.

Other students developed practices that continued over several months. One intern made [daily announcements](#) to students about treating each other with respect and recognizing the contributions of the military and military families. Another assisted a group of students in organizing their [anti-bullying club](#).

In addition to capturing stories of the interns’ work and highlighting their ideas in the newsletter, we have used an internet-based survey each year to collect data on how the interns are interacting with students, parents and school staff during their placements as well as the types of issues they are addressing. The table below provides details on how the interns spent their time.

Number of Hours Spent on Each Activity

Activity	<u>Military-Connected</u>			<u>Nonmilitary</u>			<u>Total</u>	
	N	Sum	Adj Sum	N	Sum	Adj Sum	Sum	Adj Sum
Individual Students	38	3142	3969	36	2393	3191	5535	7160
Families	34	333	470	29	235	389	568	859
Student Groups	40	1522	1826	35	1004	1377	2526	3203
Groups of Families	31	11	17	27	11	20	22	37
In-service Staff Training	34	91	128	29	159	263	250	391
IEP and Special Education Meetings	34	82	116	32	130	195	212	311
Social and Behavioral Assessment	33	211	307	27	246	437	457	744
Home Visits	33	10	15	29	33	55	43	70
Team Meetings	33	148	215	28	169	290	317	505
Planning and Conducting School Events	38	560	707	31	374	579	934	1286
Grant Writing	31	50	77	28	0	0	50	77
CHKS-related Activities	32	25	38	28	22	38	47	76
Program Development	34	285	402	29	280	463	565	865
Total Hours	445	6470	8287	388	5056	7297	11526	15584

Overall, the survey shows that the interns spent a total of over 11,000 hours working in the schools, but because not all of the interns responded to the survey, we consider the real number of hours to be over 15,000. While the proportion of military-connected students in the Consortium districts is only about 10 percent, the interns’ responses indicate that they made a significant effort to seek out and provide services to military students and families.

The interns primarily provided services to individual students, but also worked with families and saw students within group settings—such as the FOCUS groups. They took part in staff meetings, conducted social and behavioral assessments and participated in IEP meetings for students with special needs. Responses show that they served approximately 1,480 students during the 2012-13 school year, but we estimate that the number of students reached is probably closer to 1,825.

For the most part, the interns worked on attendance and truancy issues as well as on students' academic struggles. They also focused on building students' resiliency and implementing practices that would help students feel more connected to school.

School Contact Reports

Each year we have asked administrators at the schools where the interns are placed to provide us feedback on how their intern is working in the school, what they like about having the intern and the challenges they encounter during the experience. In Year 3, over 100 respondents (typically principals and assistant principals) filled out the online survey in both the fall and the spring.

In general, the school representatives are positive about having the interns work in their schools. About 65 percent said the graduate students were effective in working with students and integrated well into the school "to a large extent." The lowest marks from the school contacts focused on the interns' ability to bring new resources into the school. Overall assessments of the interns' abilities were also slightly higher in the spring semester than in the fall. More detail is provided in the table below.

The school contacts had many compliments about the interns in their schools, such as:

- "Our student intern was an amazing asset to the school in many ways. He was a great resource to staff, a wonderful communicator with parents, and a counselor/advisor to many students."
- "Being a large school, space is often limited. Our student was extremely resourceful and flexible in finding appropriate places to work with students when events/meetings/testing came up that took away her designated area."

Some of the respondents, however, also expressed concerns about the interns' lack of experience in a school setting and some interns' lack of initiative. One respondent said: "Communication with intern was a challenge. Her follow-through on tasks was consistently weak and her ability to juggle the high demands of our school was very challenging." Others just said they wished their intern could spend more hours in the school each week.

It's important to note that we don't expect the interns to enter the schools as highly skilled practitioners. They are students and they are still learning. As time goes by, however, we see them becoming more competent and adding greater value to the schools in which they are placed.

School Contact Assessments Interns (n =32-37)

	Fall 2012			Spring 2013		
	Not at all or to a little extent	To some extent	To a large extent	Not at all or to a little extent	To some extent	To a large extent
The student intern is having a positive impact on military connected students and families	21.8	21.9	56.3	21.2	30.3	48.5
The student intern is having a positive impact on school climate	20.0	31.4	48.6	16.2	32.4	51.4
The student intern is effective in working with students	13.9	22.2	63.9	10.8	24.3	64.9
The student intern is effective in working with staff	20.0	28.6	51.4	22.2	30.6	47.2
The student intern has brought new resources to the school	20.0	42.9	37.1	31.5	31.4	37.1
Communication between the school and USC staff is good	15.4	33.1	51.5	12.5	37.5	50.0
The student intern has integrated well into school community	13.5	27.0	59.5	10.2	38.5	51.3

Threat Assessment Workshop

After the 2011 CHKS results were released, it became clear that students in our Consortium schools were reporting both seeing and bringing weapons to campus. Superintendents and principals also were concerned about bullying and the proportion of students considering themselves members of a gang. In response to these issues, we sought out an expert who could train school personnel to identify potential threats and how to respond in a crisis.

J. Kevin Cameron, of the Canadian Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response, is a widely respected expert on traumatic stress. He first conducted workshops for interns and district personnel in Year 2, focusing on violence risk assessment, which combines school shooting prevention with the practice of general risk assessment relating to other forms of violence. At the beginning of Year 3—again in response to requests from principals—Cameron returned to the San Diego Academic Center for a more intensive session.

Overall, Cameron's two-day workshop received high marks from the participants. For example, almost 80 percent of the attendees said that the first day of the workshop "to a large extent" contributed to their awareness and understanding of case studies in threat assessment and to their understanding of human target and site selection. Over

80 percent agreed that the workshop met their expectations, was well organized and was relevant to their professional needs “to a large extent.”

The overall ratings were similar for both days, although slightly higher for the second day. The participants expressed that they learned the least about the FBI Four-Pronged Assessment Model and the Secret Service’s Safe School Initiative.

Comments on the evaluation forms included: “A lot of important information that was taught in an interesting and engaging way,” and “Presenter was highly engaging and had a great sense of humor that helped decrease the anxiety of learning this critical information.” Others thought it could be improved by adding more information on protocol in U.S. schools.

Assessing Competencies

We also ask the interns to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. In general, the interns responded that they felt they were most competent at:

- Using empathy, cultural responsiveness and other interpersonal skills in completing an assessment
- Demonstrating a professional demeanor that reflects awareness of and respect for military culture, students and families
- Recognizing the impact of military transitions and other stressful life events throughout the military student family’s life course
- Using professional judgment to meet the needs of all involved clients—student, family and school

The interns were the least confident in their abilities to find research related to military-connected students and translate it into their practice with students and families. They also didn’t give themselves high marks on communicating with various military-related service organizations in order to provide families with appropriate services or “using social policy analysis as a basis for action and advocacy with the school system.”

We also asked the students’ external field instructors to evaluate the interns on the same skills. We found close alignment between the instructors’ and the interns’ assessments. Instructors also rated the interns higher on interpersonal skills and understanding the unique circumstances of military students, and lower on applying research to their practice.

California Healthy Kids Survey

A major component of *Building Capacity* has been the monitoring of health risk and behavior outcomes among both military and nonmilitary students in the Consortium schools by examining responses on the CHKS.

At the beginning of the grant, our team worked with the California Department of Education (CDE) and WestEd, a research organization, to add to the CHKS two military-connected schools survey modules—one for elementary and one for secondary. For the first time, this allowed comparisons between the two groups of students on issues such as school connectedness, safety, violence and harassment, substance use, and physical and mental health.

The CHKS is part of a larger effort at WestEd called the California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey, which also includes surveys for school staff and parents. Military-connected versions of the surveys for parents and staff were also created.

Following the 2011 administration of the survey, Building Capacity also worked with the state and WestEd to add a question about students' military connection to the CHKS core survey, given to all students statewide. The CHKS given in 2013 was the first to include this question and will allow for analysis of issues affecting military-connected students throughout California.

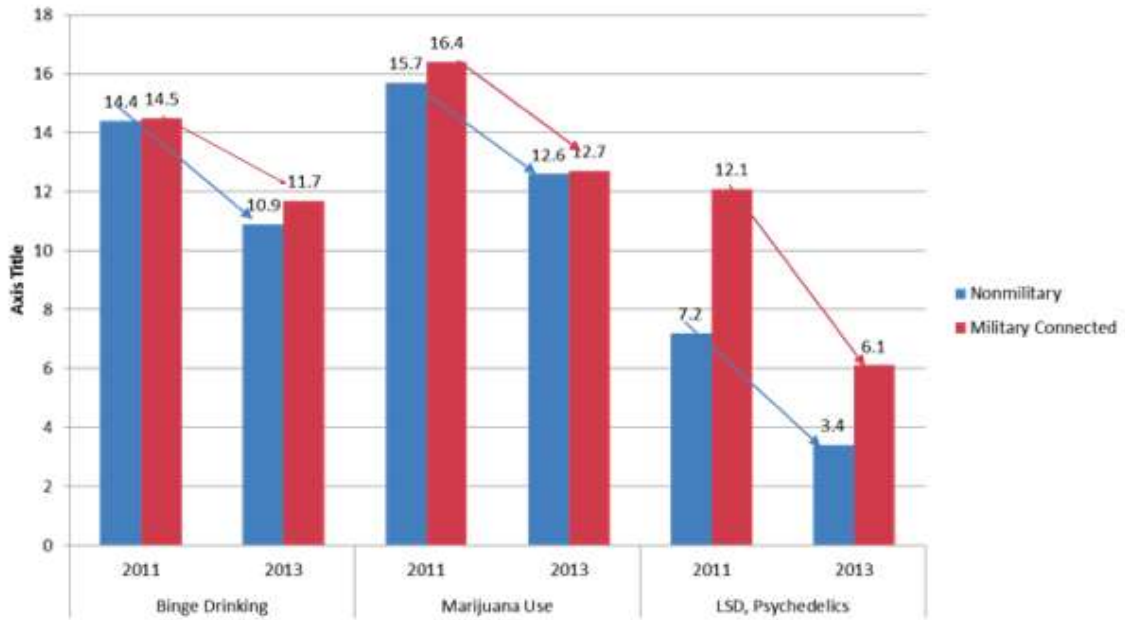
In 2011 and again in 2013, the team worked with the districts to administer the CHKS in grades 5, 7, 9 and 11 and to encourage parents and staff to complete the surveys designed for them.

Having two waves of data allows us to make some comparisons and to see whether having the interns in the schools and implementing tutoring, support and other intervention programs is having any impact on how students perceive themselves and their schools.

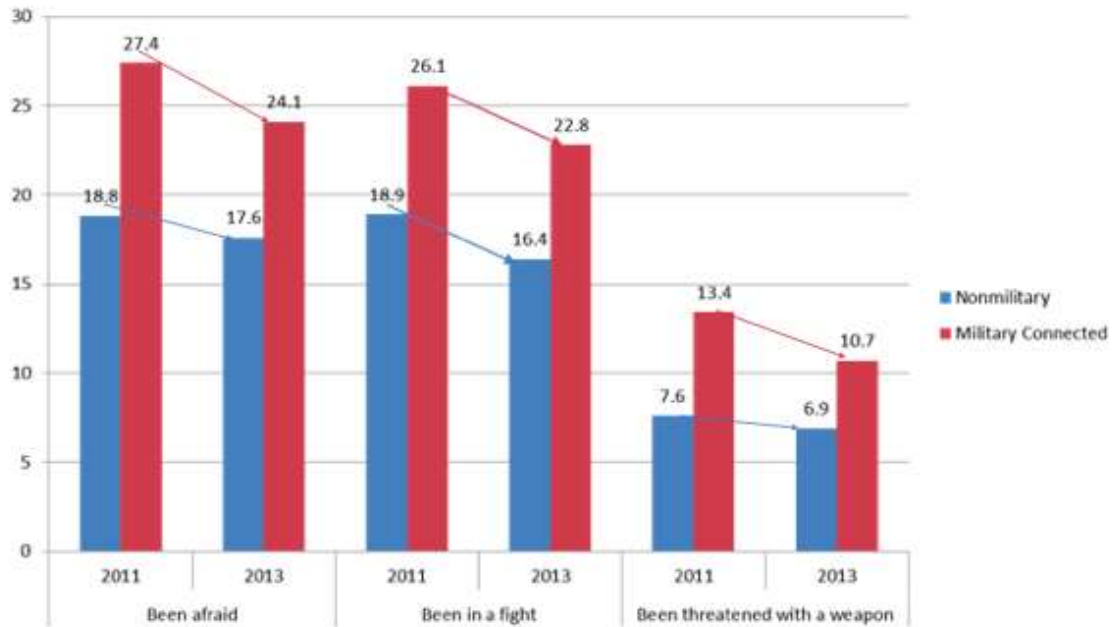
We are encouraged to see that in general, the results show across-the-board reductions in victimization and substance use throughout Consortium schools. While some of the reductions were small, the drop in percentages still represents large numbers of students. The figures below show the trends we are seeing for both military and nonmilitary students in substance use and victimization. More detailed tables are available in the [technical report](#) on our [website](#).

We do, however, see variation among the Consortium districts. Some show more improvement than others and one district experienced increases in negative behavior.

Select Substance Use Percentages 2011-2013



Select Percentages of Peer Victimization 2011-2013



Secondary Students

At the secondary level in the Consortium districts, we see encouraging signs that compared to 2011, fewer students—both military-connected and nonmilitary—are drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and using other substances. This was true for both lifetime and recent use (the past 30 days). The largest drop in lifetime use was seen in regard to LSD or other psychedelic drugs—from 7.2 percent to 3.4 percent among nonmilitary students and from 12.1 percent to 6.1 percent among military-connected students.

The percentage of nonmilitary students saying they have had at least one drink of alcohol within the past 30 days dropped from 22.3 percent in 2011 to 17.5 percent in 2013. Among military-connected students, the percentage dropped from 21.3 percent to 17.8 percent.

We also see overall decreases in the percentage of both military-connected and nonmilitary students saying that they have been victimized. This is true for both physical victimization, such as being pushed, hit or kicked, and social or verbal victimization, such as being the subject of mean rumors or being made fun of because of one's appearance.

For example, in 2011, more than 44 percent of nonmilitary students and over 51 percent of military-connected students said that sexual jokes, comments or gestures had been made about them. In 2013, those figures dropped to 39.2 percent and 47.6 percent respectively. In general, we also see some significant drops for both groups of students in the percentage saying that they have been discriminated against or bullied because of their race or because of a physical or mental condition.

In both groups of students, we also see declines in the percentages of those reporting that they have carried, have seen someone carrying or have been threatened with a weapon at school. Among nonmilitary students, the percentage saying they have seen someone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon at school dropped from 27.4 percent to 22.7 percent, and among military-connected students from 31.7 percent to 27.6 percent.

In spite of these encouraging directions, however, we see few positive changes in how students feel about their schools and view their relationships with teachers and other adults. On a range of questions related to school climate, students' responses stayed relatively the same or went slightly up or down. For example, 64 percent of nonmilitary students said in 2011 that they feel close to people in their school, but in 2013, the percentage dropped to 62.8.

Nonmilitary students actually reported somewhat better school climate in 2011, compared to 2013, but the differences, for the most part, were not significant. Military-connected students' assessments of their schools increased slightly. One significant

change is that the percentage of military-connected students saying teachers treat students fairly climbed from 46.7 percent to 51 percent.

Other comparisons between the two groups show that military-connected students tend to be more likely than nonmilitary students to report using some drugs. We saw this pattern in 2011 as well.

Military-connected students also report much higher rates of victimization compared with nonmilitary students—especially physical victimization. For example, in 2011 almost 19 percent of nonmilitary students reported being afraid of being beaten up, but over 27 percent of military-connected students reported having the same fear. Similarly, almost 19 percent of nonmilitary students reported getting in a fight while 27 percent of military-connected students reported such victimization. Involvement with weapons—either carrying one, seeing someone carry one or being threatened with one—is also higher among military-connected students. As in 2011, military-connected students are also more likely to report being harassed or bullied because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or because of a physical or mental condition.

Elementary Students

In 5th grade, students' responses show a pattern that is similar to that of secondary students. We see overall decreases in substance use between 2011 and 2013 and significant decreases in alcohol and marijuana use.

Compared to 2013, there were also statistically significant decreases since 2011 in both physical and emotional violence perpetration. For example, the percentage of nonmilitary students saying they had "hit or pushed other kids at school when you were not playing around" dropped from 33 percent to 27.4 percent, and dropped from 35.1 percent to 30 percent among military-connected students. We also see decreases in the percentages of both military-connected and nonmilitary students who say that they have been victimized, such as being hit or pushed or having other students spread mean rumors about them.

This year's results also show that while few elementary students report actually bringing a weapon to school, about a fifth say that they have seen another student with a gun or knife. This is one area where we see differences between military and nonmilitary students. Between 2011 and 2013, the percentage of nonmilitary students saying they have carried a weapon to school decreased slightly, from 2.7 percent to 2.3 percent. For military students, however, the percentage increased, from 2.9 percent to 4.5 percent. While interesting, the increase is not statistically significant.

Other differences between the two groups of students include military students reporting higher rates of victimization and substance use. Also, there was an increase in military students reporting that they have experienced cyber bullying.

Still, the vast majority of students—both military and nonmilitary—say they feel like they are a part of their school and are happy to be there. We see increases in students reporting that their teachers care about them and listen to what they have to say. Students, however, have somewhat lower opinions of their own abilities as learners than they did in 2011. Military students also appear to feel slightly less connected to their schools than nonmilitary students, but this is not surprising considering that many military students change schools multiple times.

Staff Perceptions

Another component of the California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey is the California School Climate Survey, which is given to teachers, administrators and other school staff members. This survey provides staff members' perspectives on school climate issues and areas of need among students. In general, the staff members in the Consortium districts say that their schools are supportive and welcoming, but are lacking in providing students with adequate counseling and support services.

Staff members also think their schools give students equal opportunities to succeed. And compared to 2011, there is an increase in staff members saying that students have multiple opportunities to participate in enrichment or extracurricular activities. Significant increases were also seen in staff members saying that their school fosters an appreciation of student diversity. There was a decrease since 2011, however, in staff members saying that their school effectively handles student discipline and behavior problems.

There was an increase in staff members saying that they need professional development in both increasing students' academic performance and supporting their social and emotional development.

Finally, staff members largely recognize that military students face unique challenges and may sometimes feel isolated, but they also think that most military students feel supported by both peers and teachers.

Building a Database

The purpose of collecting the CHKS data is not only to follow trends over time but also to use the results to identify which district, community and military programs and services might best address areas of need among students. So in addition to encouraging ongoing use of the CHKS data, both within the Consortium and across the state, our research team has also been interested in the potential that exists in merging the CHKS data with school-level information from the CDE, including academic data, socioeconomic status and other school demographics.

Having such a rich database will allow researchers and educators to better identify trends over time and to understand how a supportive school climate can influence a

school's academic performance as well as how transition between schools can affect both school climate and student achievement. We believe that a more supportive climate can improve academic performance.

The longitudinal nature of the database will assist researchers and educators in understanding whether there are increases or decreases over time in positive school climate, academic performance and student social and behavior outcomes. This work also further makes the case that military-connected children should be a subgroup in state and federal accountability systems.

In Year 3, members of the team made progress in this area and began to determine exactly which variables to include in order to answer the questions that most interest the research team. The team also began to discuss what they want to know about the characteristics of teachers, administrators and pupil personnel in relationship to improving school climate.

Ongoing Use of the Data

Another goal of Building Capacity has been to make the CHKS data useful and accessible not only to researchers and high-level district officials, but also to the variety of professionals within school districts, such as those writing grant proposals, those providing psychological services, and of course local school principals and teachers. We also want the data to inform and help guide community organizations partnering with and providing services to schools as well as parent groups. Using Qualtrics—the internet-based survey—has also given us additional and valuable insight and feedback from the schools.

As we enter Year 4, we have started to think about ways to encourage schools and researchers to continue making the best use of data. That is why we are now collaborating with those who are experts in using geographic information systems (GIS) to display concentrations of certain behaviors or conditions on a neighborhood or school level. It's one thing to show patterns of substance use, victimization or exposure to weapons in a table or a chart, but putting that information on to a map can make more of an impact and can spur educators, students, parents and community members to take action.

We believe that if we are able to make the data easier to access and to understand, school districts will continue to monitor the results and use the information to drive school improvement efforts and to seek out resources and programs that address areas of need among both military and nonmilitary students.

Building Evidence and Addressing Students' Needs

As our Consortium schools and districts implement various programs and practices to improve school climate for students, particularly military children, it has been important for us to gather data on how these programs are being received by students, parents and school staff. It's important to note that most of the programs discussed below were initiated by district leaders based on the issues that emerged in the CHKS data as well as areas they wanted to address.

This research allows us to monitor the effectiveness of these efforts as well as to gather lessons that can be shared with other schools regionally and across the country. Most of the initiatives carried out in the districts are mentioned here, but a few are addressed in other areas of the report. For example, the Month of the Military Child social media campaign is discussed in the Building Awareness section.

Because Nice Matters

This evaluation focuses on an anti-bullying program implemented in TVUSD called "Because Nice Matters." The program was in part inspired by training workshops offered by the Building Capacity project, which Judy Stapleton, the assistant principal of Great Oak High School, attended with other district staff members. The name of the program comes from a wall plaque that she saw in a catalog.

The initiative is simply based on the idea that being nice can make a difference. It also includes many activities designed to increase awareness of anti-bullying attitudes and behaviors.



A bus painted by students

The effort encourages and recognizes kind behavior and involves symbolic activities, such as wearing purple and black to remind everyone that bullying can cause physical and psychological damage, or wearing white to signify making a fresh start. Painting a school bus with the slogan was another activity designed to raise community awareness.

To evaluate the impact of the program, an online survey was distributed to parents and teachers in the district. The responses showed that Because Nice Matters is raising awareness and that the program's messages are well received by both parents and teachers. The feedback also suggests that the initiative's efforts should be expanded in order to make more lasting changes. Teachers, in particular, wanted to see increased attention to cyber-bullying.

As Because Nice Matters continues into another school year, Stapleton would also like to see some improvements. She wants to make sure that students understand that the effort is not only about being considerate and kind, but that it is also meant to encourage teachers and students to report bullying when they see it. She also wants students to understand that Because Nice Matters is not reserved for one week out of the school year, but instead is an initiative that should last throughout the year. She is considering designating one day a month as Because Nice Matters Day and encouraging students to wear black and purple on that day or having a special announcement made at the schools.

Learning Together

Learning Together is a peer-tutoring program that trains students to tutor struggling peers who are two grade levels below them. Instead of being the top achievers in their class, the tutors are typically those who are below proficient and might even exhibit behavior problems in the classroom. The intent of the program is to improve the performance of both groups of students, but especially the older tutors.

The superintendent of the FUESD was eager to pilot the program in the district and thought that it would be an effective model to implement with military students. During the 2011-12 school year, the program was used with 3rd and 5th graders at San Onofre School.

During the 2012-13 school year, the district implemented the math version of Learning Together with middle school students at San Onofre School, with the belief that many middle school students needed a reason to feel more connected to their schools.

The evaluation shows that close to half of the tutors—44.7 percent—felt they were able to help their tutees learn new things. Almost three-fourths of the tutors, however, said the program helped them do better in school, which is the desired result. A large majority of the tutees—80 percent—said their tutors were helping them get better grades. Parents of both tutors and tutees responded that their children’s confidence toward schoolwork was increasing, and Learning Together’s lead teachers commented that the program helps students build social connections and responsibility.

As the district moves toward a third year of implementation, issues of scheduling and selecting the students who are the best fit for the program continue to be challenges. Some coordinators also commented about the need to align the Learning Together materials with the Common Core State Standards.

School-Based FOCUS

FOCUS, which stands for [Families OverComing Under Stress](#), was developed at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and provides research-based resiliency

training to military families. Before Building Capacity collaborated with UCLA, FOCUS was delivered primarily to families and often available only on military bases. The Building Capacity team, however, thought that the program could be beneficial to all military-connected students in schools.

The FOCUS staff, as a result began training USC's MSW students to use a version that is modified for a group setting in a school. The sessions help students identify and work through their emotions and cope with the challenges of a parental deployment.

Initially, all of the interns were trained to use the program through an intensive, two-day workshop. But now FOCUS has been integrated into USC's 614 course as one of several programs that MSW students learn about as part of their training. This model is more sustainable and has allowed Building Capacity to reach its goal of bringing the program to many more students. Delivering the program in schools also provides interns and school staff a means to identify students that might need to be referred for individual counseling or additional services.

In addition to receiving training on the program in Year 3, the interns also had access to the FOCUS staff at UCLA, who led conference calls to assist the interns in implementing the program in the schools. While some interns indicated that they were too busy to participate in the conference calls, the program was implemented at a high level and the MSW students said they gained a lot of knowledge from the training. Every intern ran at least one FOCUS group at the school where he or she was placed. Some interns working in schools on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton formed more than one group.

Overall, interns ran 84 groups with 650 military-connected students and about 80 groups with 670 nonmilitary students. In journal entries, most of the interns shared that they felt the administrators and staff supported the FOCUS program and implementation and were helpful in securing permission from parents, communicating with teachers about the program and providing space for the interns to conduct the group sessions.

Some of the interns, however, said that it was a struggle to work through some of these logistical issues. And others said they wished the program also included materials that were better suited to older students. Even so, many shared that FOCUS groups were definitely helping the students who were participating in terms of improved emotional regulation, coping skills, learning how to express themselves and showing academic improvement in the classroom. One intern wrote: "Many of the students have shared very personal experiences and feelings, and they were all extremely supportive while some of them started to cry."

Our interns' experiences with FOCUS have also led our team to want to know more about how the program can benefit students. We collaborated with researchers at UCLA on a proposal to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to study the impact of the

FOCUS program on social, behavioral and academic outcomes among military-connected students in the Consortium districts. The proposal has not yet been approved for funding, but we are planning to re-submit it. We suggest that if FOCUS can improve academic and other outcomes among military students facing stressful circumstances at home, then it can also have a positive effect on other students dealing with similar challenges.

Partners at Learning

Partners at Learning (PAL) is a service-learning program in UCSD's Education Studies department, which trains undergraduate students to work as tutors and mentors for under-served students in pre-K through 12th grade. The college students also earn course credit. Students in PAL represent a variety of majors across the university. While some of them are interested in education careers, others view the program as a way to give back to their community.

We connected PAL with our Consortium schools in Year 2 because military students are often in need of academic assistance due to moving between schools. UCSD is also in an ideal position to focus on the needs of military families since it is located in a region with several military installations. In partnership with USC, UCSD initially began offering PAL participants a course on military culture so they could better understand the challenges military students are facing.

But in Year 3, Education Studies implemented changes to the program that will ensure that all 500 PAL students—not just the ones who took the special course—will become educated about the needs of military children in K-12 schools. The department has integrated information about military culture and working with military children into courses that now fulfill the university's diversity, equity and inclusion requirement for undergraduates. We see that as an important move that will better prepare the PAL students and benefit the schools in which they provide services. Our team is also working with researchers at UCSD on an IES proposal to conduct a study of the PAL service-learning program. More details on this grant are provided below.

Family Readiness Express

The Family Readiness Express (FRE) is a large RV that is operated by the U.S. Navy's Fleet and Family Support Centers and provides counseling, employment, housing and other resources to military families. Prior to the Building Capacity project, the vehicle stopped only at military family housing developments throughout San Diego. So in Year 2, we worked with the staff to schedule four visits to schools in our Consortium, with the idea that scheduling stops at schools provides another way for families to access the services and raises awareness among teachers and other school staff about the needs of military children.



The FRE at Jefferson Middle School in Oceanside

In Year 3, those visits continued, although not as many of them were scheduled. The FRE visited three schools—Vail Elementary in TVUSD, and Jefferson Middle School and Oceanside High School in OUSD.

Our team calculated that the FRE staff had a total of 842 visitors. While we have not collected data on what those visitors do with the information they receive from the FRE staff or whether they

actually contact other service providers, our hope is that this is the case.

A formal evaluation of the FRE visits was not conducted this year, but an observation report written after the Oceanside High School visit noted that the numbers of students, staff and parents stopping by the FRE was lower than the previous year. The observer suggested that perhaps the FRE should not visit the same school two years in a row.

As we think ahead to the end of the grant, we think that continuing to schedule FRE visits at schools is something that school liaison officers or military-focused community organizations could do.

Parent and Student Workshops

In Year 3, members of our team were able to engage with Consortium schools by participating in and providing workshops for students and families during the spring semester. While a series of workshops focused on helping parents to become more involved in their children’s education, others were focused on financial aid, including the California Dream Act (AB 130 & 131). Members of the Building Capacity team attended a series of school-sponsored financial aid sessions and workshops, providing additional support to primarily Spanish-speaking parents. They also visited classrooms to speak with juniors and seniors about the financial aid process and even met individually with some students to answer questions.

Our team members’ engagement with schools on topics related to student success generated interest in learning more about the higher education resources and services provided in Title I military-connected schools. Using an online survey, the Building Capacity team was able to gather information from counselors, college and career staff, parent liaisons, JROTC instructors and other key staff members on the barriers

associated with college advising as well as those individuals' expectations regarding higher education for military-connected students.

Large caseloads, a lack of time and limited opportunities for staff collaboration were mentioned as barriers to providing adequate college counseling services. The majority of respondents, however, said they expected most of the military-connected students in their schools to pursue post-secondary education and said that the qualities of resilience, discipline, flexibility and commitment would help those students be successful in college.

Data collection on these topics will continue and the Building Capacity team hopes that the information gathered would be used to generate grant proposals in the future. The team also hopes to develop a "toolbox" that educators will be able to use to help college-bound military-connected students and their parents.

In addition to the financial aid workshops, Omar Lopez, a clinical assistant professor at the USC's SDAC, collaborated with the parent coordinator and a parent volunteer at Orange Glen High School in EUHSD to offer an eight-week session on parent involvement. The workshops focused on reaching Spanish-speaking parents and covered topics such as positive discipline, learning how to motivate children and healthy lifestyles. Attendance at the sessions ranged from a low of 16 to a high of 51. The parents had the opportunity to socialize and enjoy a Latin-inspired meal, and the schools provided child-care for younger children to make the sessions more convenient for parents.

While it was unclear how many of the attendees were military-connected, Lopez says the primary intent of the sessions was to improve engagement among Latino parents. At the end of the sessions, 47 parents received a Certificate of Completion and were invited to participate in a university field trip with their children attending Orange Glen.

"I found that authentic sensitivity to a group's cultural characteristics is a key component in the engagement of parents," he says. "In this case, the goal was to attract and engage Spanish-speaking parents at a high school district."

Additional Proposals and Areas of Need

In addition to the FOCUS proposal mentioned above, the members of our team also worked during Year 3 on other grant proposals to address additional areas of need within the schools.

As noted, our team worked with researchers at UCSD on an IES proposal to conduct a study of the PAL service-learning program. A one-year pilot would emphasize tutoring services for English learners and military-connected students, and would measure the impact of the program on the students, the teachers and the community served.

Substance use among students is a serious issue that we have tried to address since the beginning of the grant. By analyzing the CHKS data, our research team has found a correlation between increased drug and alcohol use among middle and high school students and deployments of either a military parent or sibling (Additional details on this research are provided in the Publications section below). Our team worked on a proposal to the National Institute of Mental Health to develop a screening instrument to determine young adolescents' risk for substance use. While the proposal has not been funded, the prevention program and educational resources would be designed for middle school students in military-connected schools, but could positively influence nonmilitary-connected students as well. Meanwhile, we also continue to identify promising local programs and prevention efforts that could be replicated in the Consortium districts.

Teen suicide and depression is another area that we feel needs immediate attention in our Consortium districts. Even though our districts have dealt firsthand with these tragedies, it wasn't until recently that we were able to identify a training program to help educators, parents and others recognize the warning signs that a student might be thinking about suicide. In addition, researchers on our team have found that roughly a quarter of military-connected students say they have thought about ending their lives. As with substance use, more deployments can exacerbate feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide. While the percentages are higher among military-connected students, still close to 20 percent of students in nonmilitary families say they have these thoughts.

Building Awareness

With the end of the war in Iraq and the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, our attention during Year 3 broadened to include not only children of active duty members of the military, but also those children whose parents are making a transition out of the service or to new roles within the military. We recognize that this presents military families with a new set of challenges that might include another move to a new community, looking for employment and possibly recovering from physical or emotional wounds.

We continued throughout the year to use a variety of methods for sharing these messages, one of which was to publish op-eds in major news outlets. In October, 2012, for example, the CNN website published Dr. Ron Astor's commentary, "[Will candidates let returning troops fall off the fiscal cliff?](#)" In the piece, Dr. Astor questioned why neither presidential candidate had offered specific plans for supporting military families.

"After more than 10 years of war in Iraq and men and women in uniform continuing to die in Afghanistan, this silence on a national plan or funding for services only increases the stress and uncertainty that military families feel every day," he wrote. "With all the public celebration of military families on the campaign trail, this lack of proposals for new resources or a detailed plan of how federal agencies will coordinate the integration of returning troops seems like a violation of our nation's promise and its social contract with the millions of brave warriors and their families."

That same month, the Huffington Post published Dr. Astor's [op-ed](#) on how higher education institutions can assist military families both by offering education opportunities for veterans as well as by integrating military culture into preparation programs for teachers, school administrators and school counselors, social workers and psychologists.

Newsletter

Our newsletter has continued to be one of the primary vehicles we use for communicating positive news about the work in our Consortium schools and for informing readers about useful programs and resources that can benefit military children and parents.

We published 12 issues of the newsletter during Year 3, including two special editions—one on the [California Public Engagement](#), mentioned later in this report, and one on the Military Social Work Awareness Day at Petco Park, which is discussed below.

Major topics covered in the newsletters included the Learning Together program in FUESD, the release of our four guidebooks, results of the CARE Youth Project in the Escondido Union School District and co-principal investigator Marleen Wong's national

policy-level work following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut.

It's also important to note that including an experienced education journalist as part of the Building Capacity team has allowed us to effectively communicate the goals and progress of the project with a variety of audiences on a consistent basis. It is important to share the news from the Consortium schools as well as to translate the ongoing research findings into press releases, commentary pieces and blog posts. Anecdotally, the frequent positive comments we receive about the newsletter and our other articles indicate that having a writer on the team has been a wise decision.

Military Social Work Awareness Day at Petco Park

Since the first year of the grant, our team discussed the possibility of organizing a large-scale event, such as a San Diego Padres game, to recognize military families and the schools that are serving them. In collaboration with the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), this event finally took place on June 22, 2013.

The *Building Capacity* Consortium was honored during Military Social Work Awareness Day, receiving a Certificate of Recognition from NASW and a Special Congressional Recognition from Congresswoman Susan Davis, who spoke at a VIP gathering before the game. Consortium members also participated in an on-field ceremony, in which the Junior ROTC Color Guard from Oceanside High School—one of the Consortium schools—presented the flag.



Congresswoman Davis

While the event recognized the Consortium's work to support military families, our team also used it as an opportunity to continue to direct attention to the needs of military students and to the role of schools in supporting their educational and social-emotional development.



We set up a kiosk just inside a main entrance gate where we distributed information on the USC MSW program and we collected names of those interested in receiving copies of our guidebooks. As noted, we also highlighted the

event in a [special issue](#) of our newsletter.

We were able to gather only limited feedback on the event, but from the comments we did receive, we learned that participants greatly enjoyed the pre-game VIP gathering

and the on-field recognition given to organizations benefitting military children and families. Some remarked, however, that communication and coordination between the Petco Park staff and the various organizations involved could have been better organized.

Month of the Military Child Social Media Campaign

Every April is designated by the Department of Defense as the Month of the Military Child. Since the beginning of the grant, we have highlighted this recognition and encouraged the schools in the Consortium to share special announcements or plan other activities to show military students gratitude for their sacrifices and for the contributions they make to their schools.

But this year our team took a step further by running a social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr in an effort to increase awareness about the lives of military children while simultaneously driving more traffic to our pages and our website.



Members of our team dressed for Purple Up week.

The 30-day effort used purple as a theme color since purple represents the colors of all the armed services mixed together. Each day, we posted facts or trivia questions about military students and the challenges they face both in and out of school. We also highlighted well-known and prominent individuals who happened to grow up in military families, and we invited visitors to our pages to share their stories and photos. We changed the color of our logo to purple and collected photos of Consortium interns and school staff wearing purple during “Purple Up” week.

The creative strategy paid off. By the end of the campaign, the number of “likes” on our Facebook page had grown to 564, up from only 65 before April. With the fact that this was Building Capacity’s first social media campaign, these results were considered to be a success.

Publications

As in the second year of the grant, the Building Capacity research team kept up its steady pace of writing and contributing to articles for scientific journals, book chapters and publications for broader audiences. Presentations were also given at multiple conferences and other events.

One of the highlights of the year was the release of *Prevention of Bullying in Schools, Colleges and Universities: Research Report and Recommendations* at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference in April. The handbook is based on the work of a bullying prevention task force co-chaired by Dr. Astor.

Another piece that received considerable attention was an article in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* on substance use among military-connected students, based on data from the CHKS. Led by Dr. Tamika Gilreath, an assistant professor in the USC School of Social Work, the study showed that multiple deployments by a parent or sibling are associated with an increased likelihood of lifetime and recent use among adolescents. A high number of deployments were associated with a 14 percent increase in the likelihood of lifetime drug use, and there was an 18 percent increase in likelihood for recent use. Her analysis also showed that when teens have an older sibling in the military, they are more likely to use drugs than peers with a parent in the military.

Some of the members of the team are not only publishing in prestigious journals, they are also winning awards for their work. For example, Dr. Kris De Pedro, now an assistant professor in the College of Educational Studies at Chapman University, earned his Ph.D. in 2012 from USC and has been an important part of the Building Capacity research team. His dissertation, "The Role of School Climate in the Mental Health and Victimization of Students in Military-Connected Schools," received the 2012-13 Dissertation of the Year Award from the Rossier School of Education at USC.

As mentioned in the Building Awareness section of this report, Dr. Astor also continues to contribute commentary pieces on policies related to military students and families. Other members of the team also submit articles to websites and publications for educators, social workers and parents. Editor and writer Linda Jacobson wrote an article for the *Harvard Education Letter* on the ways in which Building Capacity is setting an example for how all schools can welcome and be more supportive of students experiencing frequent transitions.

In all, the research team has published or submitted over 75 articles and chapters and given almost 60 presentations since the beginning of the grant. An up-to-date list of publications is included in the Appendix.

While it has not yet been released, work also took place in Year 3 on articles that are included in a special issue of the *Children and Schools* journal devoted to military-

connected students. Published by Oxford University Press for the NASW, the journal highlights innovative practices and reaches a wide range of professionals working in education, child development and child welfare.

Articles on our project are also being included in publications that reach entire organizational memberships. For example, a blogger for the American Psychological Association (APA) is writing an article on Building Capacity that will appear in the *APA Monitor on Psychology*, a monthly publication. Members of the team also submitted an article to *Intersections in Practice*, an annual bulletin focusing on special practice areas for the NASW.

Conference Sessions

During Year 3, our team continued to present research findings and information about our project at numerous conferences. A full list of presentations since the beginning of the project—including more than 20 in Year 3—is provided in the Appendix.

We feel that Building Capacity has also been instrumental in the fact that for the first time, major research organizations are holding special conference sessions on issues affecting military children. AERA included a symposium on “Meeting the Needs of Military-Connected Students,” in which members of the Building Capacity team presented data on the project. The 2013 AERA meeting was also significant because U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan attended and spoke about testing data. This was the first time an education secretary has attended the association’s annual conference.

Special sessions on military-connected students were also held at conferences of the American Public Health Association, the APA, the School Social Work Association of America and the Society for Social Work Research. Through these sessions, military students and families are receiving attention from researchers that have not considered this population in the past.

Guidebooks

This was also the year that our four guidebooks began to be distributed to educators, parents, military organizations, university professors and others involved with military-connected schools.

Getting the books to the schools and families within the Consortium—at no charge—was a high priority for us, so we posted a request form on our website so our team could keep track of who received the books and whether they wanted the teacher, administrator, pupil personnel or parent book.

We feel that the marketing of these books has been largely our responsibility, so we have taken every opportunity to mention them in articles and at conferences and to provide links to the ordering pages as much as possible.

As part of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's "Educating the Educators" campaign, the books are being made available to over 150 university education programs and others who say they want to have these resources. Teachers

College Press added a link to their ordering page advertising that the books are available for free. Other organizations that have joined them in publicizing the books include School Social Workers of America, the American Council for School Social Work, military.com, and the National Military Families Association.



We are also working with major education organizations, such as the teachers' unions, the National PTA, AERA and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to make these books available at no cost. DoDEA is also making them available to schools as part of its partnership program.

Since the release of the books, we have given out roughly 7,000 copies to parents, teachers, school administrators, military organizations and other

professionals working in partnership with schools. We are now preparing to order an additional 6,000 books to distribute, and we are tracking how recipients use the ideas from the books to improve schools for military children.

Working Toward Sustainability

Now in the fourth year of the grant, the Building Capacity Consortium is thinking even more about how to sustain the progress that has been made in the universities by adding a military-connected student focus to existing training programs, as well as the progress that has been made in the districts.

In the first section on “Graduate Students in Military-Connected Schools,” we discussed the 614 school social work course at USC and the initial discussion at SDSU to continue the program in some way after the grant. At the USC’s SDAC, we have been working to connect the professors with the Consortium superintendents to provide continuity. As Year 4 began, we also encouraged the SDAC faculty to attend our fall meetings with superintendents and their staff.

In the Building Evidence and Addressing Students’ Needs section, we also discussed how training in the school-based FOCUS program will continue as part of the 614 course, and we explained how all 500 PAL tutors at UCSD will learn about the educational and social-emotional needs of military children.

We will also be working with community organizations and school liaison officers to explore which components of the Building Capacity project they would like to continue implementing. As mentioned earlier, these organizations, for example, could continue to have the FRE visit schools to share information on resources and services for military children and families.

District Initiatives

In addition to participating in Building Capacity, many of the Consortium districts are involved in or have developed other school climate improvement efforts that share goals similar to those of our grant. Part of CVESD, for example, is within a Promise Neighborhood—an area that receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop high expectations for students and support them toward success in college and careers. OUSD, in another example, has adopted a character education initiative called the 8 Keys of Excellence, which emphasizes values such as integrity and commitment and important lessons such as “failure leads to success.” Finally, EUSD has woven Building Capacity into its Collaborative Agency Resources for Escondido—or CARE—project, which 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.

We are encouraged by these various initiatives and realize that for the efforts that have been made during Building Capacity to be sustained, they will need to be layered on to what districts are already doing and adapted to best fit the needs of each community.

Adding Personnel

We are encouraged that more districts in the Consortium are hiring school social workers and other personnel who can continue many of the intervention programs that have been successful and supervise future interns. In addition to the EUSD, the Escondido High School District and the TVUSD have also hired professionals for these positions. Again, we believe adding these staff members shows that the districts are making improvements in school climate and students' well-being a priority.

In our surveys of local school administrators, about 50 percent said they definitely need a full-time social worker, another 11 percent said probably. And about 22 percent said maybe. We also find that some schools are hiring social workers on a part-time basis or using grant funds to pay for the position. These are signs that the districts consider these positions to be valuable and important in meeting the needs of students.

Inspiring Other Universities

We want to see the progress that has been made in the Consortium schools continue. But we are also encouraged by the fact that other universities are interested in the ideas and practices that we have used—not only to educate future school personnel about military children but also to give them a rich field experience.

During Year 3, Dr. Astor received several inquiries from other universities and met with University of Illinois leaders in Chicago. Diana Pineda, the San Diego project manager for Building Capacity, also traveled to Old Dominion University in Virginia to make a presentation on the project and share information with local teachers, administrators and community members. These visits, however, are just a small example of the multiple requests we have received from universities across the country for information and guidance on implementing something similar.

On a related note, we are also seeing DoDEA take some of the survey questions on school climate that are asked in the CHKS and implementing them in their system of schools in the U.S. and around the world. Collecting responses from students in DoDEA schools will allow for a three-way comparison between nonmilitary students, military students in public schools and military students in DoDEA schools.

Partnerships and Policy Efforts

Over the past three years, Building Capacity has made an impact well beyond the eight Consortium districts in part because of the connections we've made with others who care about military-connected children.

Our involvement with the San Diego Military Family Collaborative increased during Year 3. This group consists of about 50 organizations and works to address areas of need among military families. Pineda began attending their monthly meetings and became part of the group's educational task force. Through this partnership, other service providers in the county have learned about Building Capacity, and in turn, these connections have increased our awareness of programs and opportunities that might fit the needs of the schools in the Consortium.

The success of *Building Capacity* also depends not only on how services and school climate conditions are improved within the Consortium schools, but also on the extent to which policies are changed at the state and federal level to be more responsive to the needs and shifting circumstances of military children and their parents.

California Public Engagement

Progress was made in this area when USC hosted the California Public Engagement in September 2012. Jointly organized by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), Building Capacity and the USC Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and



From left, MCEC board member Patty Shinseki, U.S. Army Major General (Ret.) Paul Mock, Dr. Ron Astor and Dr. Anthony Hassan at the California Public Engagement event.

Military Families (CIR), the event brought together key decision makers to identify future directions in services for military children and to set goals and timelines for creating a "web of care" for military children.

Over 100 civilian and military-connected leaders from community organizations, the military, businesses, school districts, universities, and faith-based groups participated.

"What is done here in California should spread to all states," said Dr. Astor in

his comments to the attendees.

The participants met in sector workgroups to identify opportunities and create action plans. Here are some highlights of their plans:

- The **business** sector workgroup focused on the need for a comprehensive, web-

- based list of resources available to military-connected youth and families.
- Those in the combined **healthcare and faith** workgroup highlighted social media as a tool for raising awareness of the needs of military children. They also proposed to create a YouTube video to communicate the message.
 - In addition to supporting the business sector's idea of creating an online list of resources, those in the **service providers, organizations and clubs** workgroup recommended that emergency cards required by schools be used to identify military-connected children as well as to promote the resources that are available to them. They also suggested a review of the California Standards for Family Strengthening and Support and the development of a training module on military-connected youth for family support organizations.
 - A strong recommendation from the **education** workgroup is that military-connected students be identified as a subgroup in school accountability data systems, such as No Child Left Behind, so that educators and the public can gain more information on military students' academic needs and provide appropriate support. The group also emphasized the need for military student identifiers so schools can have more accurate information on the numbers of military students in their schools. This group also emphasized the importance of training existing and future educators to recognize the needs of these students and become familiar with military culture.
 - Finally, the **community leaders** workgroup focused on improving and simplifying the process through which military veterans and their families receive the benefits they have earned.

Implementation of the Interstate Compact

Another priority highlighted at the event was the need for California to make progress on implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which is intended to reduce or eliminate "barriers to educational success" for children from military families as they move between schools and across state lines. While schools near bases are familiar with the Compact, it's important that all schools are aware of the Compact's provisions.

Since the event, significant progress was made in this area. The State Council began holding meetings and working on a report for the state legislature. We highlighted this progress in [one of our newsletters](#). The Council also began working on the creation of an "intake form" for school liaison officers, military family organizations and school districts that would determine whether families enrolling in school have any issues that can be addressed by the Compact.

We have also seen the concept of creating individual student identifiers for military children take off in other states. Currently, six states now have legislation allowing military families—whether active duty, in the National Guard or the Reserves—to voluntarily identify themselves. We believe that as with Compact, and other reforms

such the Common Core standards, this practice will continue to spread to other states.

National Policy Work

In addition to advocating for educational policies that support military students at the state level, Dr. Astor has spent time interacting with leaders in Washington around these issues, especially since some members of Congress are also working to insert military student identifiers into federal legislation.

During Year 3, Dr. Astor made two trips to Washington D.C. to meet with various Congressional staff members and officials in both the Education and Defense departments. These visits present opportunities to share what the Building Capacity project has accomplished as well as to advocate for policies that can improve school experiences for military students. The trip in February also included USC School of Social Work Dean Marilyn Flynn and Dr. Anthony Hassan, the director of CIR, and covered issues affecting both military students and veterans.

International Connections

The data and school climate monitoring aspect of our project is also having influence outside of the U.S.

Near the end of Year 3, Diana Pineda, the San Diego project manager for Building Capacity, visited Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in Chile to present to researchers who are in the process of implementing a monitoring survey and a process similar to the one used in Building Capacity Consortium schools. She met with educators to learn about the programs being implemented there in the school and to share what our research team has been learning since the beginning of the grant. This visit was part of an ongoing collaboration with Dr. Veronica Lopez, a professor there who is implementing the monitoring system to help schools improve. Dr. Lopez also visited USC and [presented](#) her work during the summer of 2013, and Dr. Astor and Dr. Benbenishty previously traveled to Chile. As part of this partnership, USC is also offering free tuition to doctoral students from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso that want to study at USC.

Dr. Astor and Dr. Benbenishty also continue to support data monitoring and school climate and safety efforts in both France and Israel. Additional trips are scheduled to collaborate with education officials in both countries.

Conclusion

Building Capacity has become much more than a project focusing on eight school districts in Southern California. The work is having a rippling effect throughout other universities, school districts, among lawmakers and even in other countries.

Policymakers and educators are adopting the view that it is important for schools to know whether they have military-connected students and that these students may need additional support to be successful in school in spite of the unique obstacles that get in their way.

Another significant event that occurred in Year 3 is that the USC team received another DoDEA grant that will focus specifically on transition issues and using digital technology to improve the way districts and schools support families through moves between schools.

This new grant, called Welcoming Practices that Address Transition Needs of Military Students in Public Schools, is inspired by what we have learned in the three years of the Building Capacity grant. While we will focus on smoothing the transition process for military families, we hope that the new grant will also lead to replicable practices that any school can use to welcome new students and parents into their community.

Appendix

The following is a list of papers published, submitted, presented or in the process of being resubmitted for review in journals. This is a *cumulative* list of all manuscripts developed and published during the project period.

Books

Military-Connected Student Focus

Rubin, A. & Weiss, E.L., Coll, J.E. (Eds.) (2013). *Handbook of military social work*.

Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Astor, R. A., Jacobson, L., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Wong, M., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Estrada, J.N. (2012). *The pupil personnel guide for supporting students from military families*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Astor, R. A., Jacobson, L., Benbenishty, R., Cederbaum, J.A., Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Wong, M., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Estrada, J.N. (2012). *The military family's parent guide for supporting your child in school*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Astor, R. A., Jacobson, L., Benbenishty, R., Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Wong, M., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Estrada, J.N. (2012). *The teacher's guide for supporting students from military families*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Astor, R. A., Jacobson, L., Benbenishty, R., Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Wong, M., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Estrada, J.N. (2012). *The school administrator's guide for supporting students from military families*. New York: Teachers College Press.

School Climate and Monitoring Focus

Shlonsky, A., & Benbenishty, R. (in press). *From evidence to outcomes in child welfare: An international reader*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., & Jacobson, L. (in progress for 2014). *Mapping and monitoring school safety in schools and school districts: An evidence-based guide*.

Book Chapters (Published or in Press)

Military-Connected Student Focus

Weiss, E.L., Coll, J.E. & DeBraber, T. (accepted) Social work with military and veteran families. In K. Corcoran (Ed.), *Social Workers' Desk Reference* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Weiss, E.L. (accepted) Building community in a diverse college classroom. In J.E. Coll, & E.L. Weiss (Eds.), *Student veterans in human service programs: A primer for administrators, faculty and academic advisors*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

- Weiss, E.L. & Canfield J. (accepted). Veteran students and mental health. In J.E. Coll, & E. L. Weiss (Eds.), *Student veterans in human service programs: A primer for administrators, faculty and academic advisors*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.
- Esqueda, M.C., De Pedro, K., & Atuel, H. (accepted). Examining the roles and responsibilities of institutions of higher education after nearly a decade of war. In J.E. Coll, & E.L. Weiss (Eds.), *Student veterans in human service programs: A primer for administrators, faculty and academic advisors*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.
- Yamada, A-M, Atuel, H.R, & Weiss, E. (2013). Military culture and multicultural diversity among military service members: Implications for mental health providers. In F. A. Paniagua and A.M. Yamada (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural mental health: Assessment and treatment of diverse populations* (2nd ed., pp. 389-410). Watham, MA: Academic Press
- Weiss, E.L. & Coll, J.E. (2013). Children & youth impacted by military service: A school-based perspective. In C. Franklin, M.B. Harris & P. Allen-Mears (Eds.), *The school services sourcebook: A guide for school based professionals* (2nd ed.) (pp. 695-706). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rubin, A. & Weiss, E.L. (2013). Secondary trauma in military social work. In A. Rubin, E.L. Weiss & J.E. Coll (Eds.) *Handbook of military social work*. (pp. 67-78). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Weiss, E.L., DeBraber, T. & Santoyo, A., & Creager, T. (2013). Theory and practice with military couples and families. In A. Rubin, E.L. Weiss & J.E. Coll (Eds.) *Handbook of military social work* (pp. 467-492). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Martin, J.A., Franklin, K., Yarvis, J.S., Coll, J.E. & Weiss, E.L. (2013). Appendix: Veteran organizations and military family resources. In . In A. Rubin, E.L. Weiss & J.E. Coll (Eds.) *Handbook of military social work* (pp. 493-516). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Weiss, E. (2012). Children and youth impacted by military service: A school-based resilience building behavioral health perspective. In C. Franklin, M. B. Harris, & P. A. Meares (Eds.), *The school services sourcebook* (2nd edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

School Climate and Monitoring Focus

- Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). Children's victimization in school. In A.C. Michalos (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of quality of life research*. Dordrecht, Germany: Springer.
- Pitner, R.O., Marachi, R., Astor, R.A., & Benbenishty R, & (in press). Evidence-based violence prevention programs and best implementation practices. In A.R. Roberts (Ed.), *Social worker's desk reference* (3rd Edition). N.Y. Oxford University Press.
- Pitner, R.O., Astor, R.A., & Benbenishty, R. (in press). Violence in schools. In P.A. Meares (Ed.), *Social work services in schools* (7th edition). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- American Education Research Association. (2013). *Prevention of bullying in schools, colleges, and universities: Research report and recommendations*. Washington, DC: American Education Research Association. (Astor, R co-chair with Espelage, D.).
- Marachi, R., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (2012). An overview of best violence prevention practices in schools. In C. Franklin, M. B. Harris, & P. A. Meares (Eds.), *The school services sourcebook* (2nd edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Astor, R.A., Meyer-Reynolds, H., Benbenishty, R., Pat-Horenczyk, R., Brom, D., Baum, N., Schiff, M., & De Pedro, K.T. (2012). The influence of the Second Lebanon-Israeli War on Israeli students in urban school settings: Findings from the Nahariya district-wide screening process. In K.S. Gallagher, R. Goodyear, D. Brewer, & R. Rueda, R. (Eds.), *Urban education: A model for leadership and policy* (pgs. 218-240). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2012). Making the case for an international perspective on school violence: Implications for theory, research, policy, and assessment. In S.R. Jimerson, A.B. Nickerson, M.J. Mayer & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: International research and practice* (2nd edition, pp. 15-26) New York: Routledge.
- Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2012). Monitoring school violence in Israel, National studies and beyond: Implications for theory, practice, and policy. In S. R. Jimerson, A.B. Nickerson, M.J. Mayer & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: International research and practice* (2nd edition, pp. 191-202) New York: Routledge.
- Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Shadmy, H., Raz, T., Algery, E., Zeharia, M., Ratner, D., & De Pedro, K.T. (2011). No school left behind: Merging Israel's national academic and school safety monitoring system and matching data-driven interventions for each school (Chapter 8). In J.S. Hoffman , L. Knox & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Beyond suppression: Global perspectives on youth violence*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Pat-Horenczyk, R., Brom, D., Baum, N., Benbenishty, R., Schiff, M., & Astor, R. A. (2011). A citywide school-based model for addressing the needs of children exposed to terrorism and war. In: V. Ardino (Ed.), *Post-traumatic syndromes in children and adolescent* (PP. 243-254). New York: Wiley/Blackwell Press.

Journal Articles (Published or in Press)

Military-Connected Student Focus

- Cederbaum, J.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., Astor, R.A., & Pineda, D., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Atuel, H.R. (in press). Wellbeing and suicidal ideation of public middle/high school students by military-connectedness. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
- De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., Cederbaum, J.A., & Astor, R.A. (in press). District, school, and community stakeholder perspectives on the experiences of military-connected students. *Teachers' College Record*.

- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Esqueda, M.C. (in press). School climate perceptions among students in military-connected schools: A comparison of military and non-military students from the same schools. *Military Behavioral Health Journal*.
- Gilreath, T.D., Estrada, J.N., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). Development and use of the California Healthy Kids Survey: Perceptions of military and nonmilitary students, parents, and school staff in eight military-connected school districts. *Children & Schools*.
- Esqueda, M.C., Cederbaum, J.A., Malchi, K., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). The military social work fieldwork placement: An analysis of the time and activities graduate student interns provide military-connected schools. *Children & Schools*.
- De Pedro, K.T., Atuel, H.R., Malchi, K., Esqueda, M.C., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). Responding to the needs of military students and military-connected schools: The perceptions and actions of school administrators. *Children & Schools*.
- Berkowitz, R., De Pedro, K.T., Couture, J., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). Military parents' perceptions of public school support for their children. *Children & Schools*.
- Cederbaum, J.A., Malchi, K., Esqueda, M., Benbenishty, R., Atuel, H.R., & Astor, R.A. (in press). Student-instructor assessments: Examining the skills and competencies of social work students placed in military-connected schools. *Children & Schools*.
- Astor, R.A., De Pedro, K.T., Gilreath, T.D., Esqueda, M.C., & Benbenishty, R. (2013). The promotional role of community, school, family, and peer contexts for military students in wartime. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*. Advance access published DOI 10.1007/s10567-013-0139-x.
- Estrada, J.N., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (2013). Gang membership of California middle school students: Behaviors and attitudes as mediators of school violence. *Health Education Research*. Advance access published doi:10.1093/her/cyt037.
- Gilreath, T.D., Cederbaum, J.A., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., & Atuel, H.R. (2013). Substance use among military-connected youth: The California healthy kids survey. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 44(2), 150-153.
- Jacobson, L. (2013). Addressing the high costs of student mobility. *Harvard Education Letter*, 29(2), 4-6.
- Esqueda, M.C., Astor, R.A., & De Pedro, K.T. (2012). A call to duty: Educational policy and school reform addressing the needs of children from military families. *Educational Researcher*, 41(2), 65-70.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Estrada, J.N., Smith, G.A., & Esqueda, M.C. (2012). The children of military service members: Challenges, resources, and future educational research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81, 566-618.

Weiss, E. L., Coll, J.E., Gebauer, J., Smiley, K., & Carrillo, E. (2010). The military genogram: A solution-focused approach for resiliency building in service members and their families. *The Family Journal: Counseling for Couples and Families* 18(4), 395-406.

School Climate and Monitoring Focus

Berkowitz, R. (in press). Student and teacher responses to violence in school: The divergent views of bullies, victims, and bully-victims. *School Psychology International*

Estrada, J.N., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (in press). Gang membership, school violence, and the mediating effects of risk and protective behaviors in California high schools. *Journal of School Violence*.

Astor, R.A., Cornell, D.G., Espelage, D.L., Furlong, M.J., Jimerson, S.R., Mayer, M.G. et al. (2013). A call for more effective prevention of violence. *The School Psychologist*, 67(2), 40- 43.

Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence (2013): December 2012 Connecticut School Shooting Position Statement. *Journal of School Violence*, 12(2), 119- 133.

Chen, J.K., & Astor, R.A. (2012). School variables as mediators of the effect of personal and family factors on school violence in Taiwanese junior high schools. *Youth & Society*, 44(2), 175-200.

Schiff, M., Pat-Horenczyk, R., Benbenishty, R., Brom, D., Baum, N., & Astor, R.A. (2012). School students' posttraumatic symptoms, substance use and violence perpetration in the aftermath of war. *Social Science and Medicine*, 75(7), 1321-8.

Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (2011). Supervision de la violence en milieu scolaire en Israël. *Cahiers de la sécurité*, 16, 150-162, Institut National des Hautes Etudes de la Sécurité et de la Justice (INHESJ).

Chen, J. K., & Astor, R.A. (2011). Students' personal traits, violence exposure, family factors, school dynamics and the perpetration of school violence in Taiwanese elementary schools. *Health Education Research*, 26(1), 150-166.

Green J., Furlong, M., Astor, R.A, Benbenishty, R. & Espinoza, E. (2011) Assessing school victimization in the United States, Guatemala, and Israel: Cross-cultural psychometric analysis of the school victimization scale. *Victims and Offenders*, 6 (3), 1-16.

Pitner, R.O., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Haj-Yahia, M., & Zeira, A. (2011) Putting context into a cultural perspective: Examining Arab and Jewish adolescents' judgments and reasoning about spousal violence. *Violence Against Women*, 17(5), 584-602.

Chen, J. K., & Astor, R.A. (2011). School engagement, risky peer, and student-teacher relationships as mediators of school violence in Taiwanese vocational vs. academically oriented high schools. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(1), 10-30.

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- Astor, R.A., Guerra, N., & Van Acker, R. (re-published in French, September 2010). Comment améliorer les recherches sur la violence à l'école? Diversité Ville-École-Intégration, Bouffons, fayots et intellos. De l'influence des pairs, 162. <http://www2.cndp.fr/lesScripts/bandeau/bandeau.asp?bas=http://www2.cndp.fr/revueVEI/som162.htm>
- Chen, J.K., & Astor, R.A. (2010) School violence in Taiwan: Examining how western risk factors predict school violence in an Asian culture. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25 (8), 1388-1410.

Journal Articles (Revise and Resubmit)

Military-Connected Student Focus

- Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Cederbaum, J.A., Atuel, H.R., & Benbenishty, R. (revise and resubmit). School violence and victimization among military-connected youth. Submitted to *Preventive Medicine*.

School Climate and Monitoring Focus

- Estrada, J.N., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (revise and resubmit). A statewide study of gang membership and violent behaviors in California secondary schools. Submitted to *Youth & Society*.
- Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Estrada, J.N., Benbenishty, R., & Unger, J. B. (revise and resubmit). School victimization and substance use among adolescents in California. Submitted to *Prevention Science*.

Journal Articles (Under Review)

School Climate and Monitoring Focus

- Berkowitz, R., Glickman, H., Benbenishty, R., Ben-Artzi, E., Raz, T., Lipshtadt, N., & Astor, R. (under review). Compensating, mediating, and moderating effects of school climate on academic achievement gaps in Israel. Submitted to *Teacher's College Record*.
- Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Cederbaum, J.A., Benbenishty, R., & Pineda, D. (under review). Bullying and discrimination experiences of military-connected students attending public secondary schools. Submitted to *Teacher's College Record*.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Berkowitz, R. (under review). Victimization among students in military-connected schools: The role of school climate. Submitted to *Educational Researcher*.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Berkowitz, R. (under review). The role of school climate and deployment in the mental health of students from military-connected schools. Submitted to *American Educational Research Journal*.
- Jacobson, L., Atuel, H.R., & Pineda, D. (under review). The Building Capacity project: An exemplar on supporting military-connected schools. *Intersections*.

Policy Briefs, Commentaries, and Encyclopedia Entries

Military-Connected Student Focus

- Weiss, E.L., Daley, J.G. & DeBraber, T. (2013, May 28), Military social work. In E.J. Mullen (Ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies in Social Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Jacobson, L. (2013). An exit interview helps kids PCS. Military.com. Retrieved from <http://www.military.com/spouse/military-education/military-children-education/an-exit-interview-helps-kids-pcs.html?col=7000023044354&comp=7000023044354&rank=2>
- Weiss, E.L. & DeBraber, T. (Fall 2012) *Child maltreatment in military families: Risk & resilience factors*. National Association of Social Work (NASW), Child Welfare Specialty Issue Newsletter. Washington DC: NASW.
- Weiss, E.L. & Santoyo, A. (2012). Military families, effects of combat and deployment. In C. R. Figley (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide* (p. 385-389). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weiss, E.L. & Reda, O. (2012). Childhood traumatic stress. In C. R. Figley (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide* (p. 85-89). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thompson, M. (2012, October). Building better schools for troops' kids. Retrieved from <http://nation.time.com/2012/10/18/building-better-schools-for-troops-kids/>
- Astor, R.A. (2012, October). Making universities and colleges more military friendly. Huffington Post. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-avi-astor/veterans-college-education-_b_1958796.html
- Astor, R.A. (2012, October). Will candidates let returning troops fall off the fiscal cliff? CNN. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/03/opinion/astor-vets-candidates/index.html?hpt=op_t1
- Astor, R.A. (2012, March). Educational opportunity for military children. Huffington Post. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-avi-astor/military-children-education_b_1386074.html
- Atuel, H.R., Esqueda, M.C., & Jacobson, L. (2011, September). The military child within the public school system. Retrieved from http://cir.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/CIR-Policy-Brief_Sep2011_H.Atuel-M.Esqueda-L.Jacobson.pdf
- Astor, R. A.(2011, June). The need to support students from military families. Education Week. http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/08/33astor_ep.h30.html
- Astor, R. A. (2011, April). Making sure children from military families are not left behind. Huffington Post. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-avi-astor/making-sure-children-in-m_b_849055.html

Conference Presentations

Military-Connected Student Focus (Presented)

- Gilreath, T.D. (August 2013). Patterns and predictors of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among military-connected adolescents. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Atuel, H.R. (August 2013). Examining the relationship between school climate and victimization: A study of secondary students in military-connected schools. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.
- Atuel, H.R., Berkowitz, R., De Pedro, K.T., Couture, J. Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R.A. (August 2013). Military parents perceptions of public school supports for their children. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.
- Garcia, E., De Pedro, K., Astor, R.A., Lester, P., & Benbenishty, R. (July 2013). Evaluating the impact of training social work interns in FOCUS skill-building groups on school climate. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Military Child Education Coalition, Baltimore, MD.
- Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Cederbaum, J.A., Atuel, H.R., & Benbenishty, R. (April 2013). Social violence and weapon carrying among military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Cederbaum, J. A., Gilreath, T. D., Benbenishty, R., Astor, R. A., Pineda, D., De Pedro, K., Esqueda, M., & Atuel, H.R. (April 2013). Depression, suicidal ideation, and well-being for military and nonmilitary public middle and high school students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association Conference, San Francisco, CA.
- Berkowitz, R., Glickman, H., Benbenishty, R., Ben-Artzi, E., Raz, T., & Lipshtadt, N. (April 2013). Achievement gap: The role of school climate in mediating, moderating and compensating the relationship between students' socio-economic background and their academic achievements. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., & Gilreath, T.D. (April 2013). School climate perceptions among students in military-connected schools: A comparison of military and non-military students from the same schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R. & Berkowitz, R. (April 2013). The role of school climate in the mental health of secondary students: A study of students in military-connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Gilreath, T.D., Benbenishty, R., & Berkowitz, R. (April 2013). Victimization among students in military-connected schools: The role of school climate. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Estrada, J.N., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., & Benbenishty, R. (April 2013). Exploring school-based mediators of violence perpetrated and experienced by gang members in California middle schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Estrada, J.N., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., & Benbenishty, R. (April 2013). School behaviors and attitudes as mediators of gang influence on school violence in high schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D. (April 2013). School victimization and weapon carrying among military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Pineda, D., & Astor, R.A. (March 2013). Meeting the needs of military-connected students: Calls from the field and inter-disciplinary responses from higher education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the School Social Work Association of America, San Diego, CA.
- Wrabel, S.L., Berkowitz, R., & Astor, R.A. (February 2013). Military-connected students, mobility, and school performance in California. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy, New Orleans, LA.
- Atuel, H.R., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R., Cederbaum, J.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., De Pedro, K.T., & Esqueda, M.C. (January 2013). Discriminatory bullying among military-connected students attending public schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research, San Diego, CA.
- Cederbaum, J.A., Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Pineda, D., De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., & Atuel, H.R. (January 2013). Normative rates of depression, suicide and well-being for military and non-military middle and high school public school students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research, San Diego, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D., Cederbaum, J.A., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., & Atuel, H.R. (January 2013). Prevalence of lifetime and recent substance use among military and non-military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research, San Diego, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D., Cederbaum, J.A., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., Atuel, H.R., & De Pedro, K.T. (January 2013). School violence and victimization among military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research, San Diego, CA.

- Mogil, C., Garcia, E., Astor, R.A., & Lester, P. (November 2012). Harnessing university partnerships to build community capacity to serve military children. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, San Diego, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D., Cederbaum, J.A., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., Atuel, H.R., & Unger, J.B. (October 2012). School alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among military and non-military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Atuel, H.R., Cederbaum, J.A., & Unger, J.B. (October 2012). School violence and victimization among military and non-military-connected youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Gilreath, T.D. (October 2012). Recent substance use among military-connected youth: A latent class analysis of perceptions and experiences. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, San Francisco, CA.
- De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., Astor, R. A., Cederbaum, J.A., & Young, T. (April 2012). Examining the challenges of military students: The viewpoints of educators who work with military-connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, BC.
- De Pedro, K.T., Atuel, H.R., Malchi, K., Esqueda, M.C., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (April 2012). Principals' perspectives on military-connected students in civilian public schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, BC.
- Gilreath, T.D., Estrada, J.N., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (April 2012). The California healthy kids survey military module: Perceptions of eight military-connected school districts. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, BC.
- Esqueda, M.C., Malchi, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (April 2012). Examining the activities and client groups of social work interns in military-connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, B.C.
- Malchi, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Esqueda, M.C., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2012). Alignment of student-instructor assessments: Examining the skills and competencies of social work interns placed in military-connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, BC.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Estrada, J.N, & Smith, G., & Esqueda, M.C. (January 2012). The children of military service personnel: Challenges, supports, and future educational research. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research, Washington, D.C.

- De Pedro, K.T., Esqueda, M.C., Astor, R. A., Cederbaum, J.A., & Young, T. (January 2012). The experiences of military children in schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- Gilreath, T.D., Estrada, J.N., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (January 2012). Development and use of the California healthy kids survey military module: Comparing perceptions of military and nonmilitary students, parents, and school staff in eight military-connected school districts. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, DC.
- Esqueda, M.C., Malchi, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R. & Astor, R. A. (January 2012). The military social work fieldwork placement: An analysis of the time and activities interns provide military- connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- Malchi, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Esqueda, M.C., Benbenishty. R., & Astor, R. A. (January 2012). Alignment of student-instructor assessments: Examining the skills and competencies of social work interns placed in military-connected schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- Atuel, H.R., Malchi, K., Esqueda, M.C., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (January 2012). Perceptions of public school principals: Assessing the needs of military and non-military students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- Gilreath, T.D., Estrada, J.N., Astor, R., & Benbenishty, R. (November 2011). Substance use and school victimization among California youth. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, Washington, DC.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Esqueda, M.C., & Estrada, J.N. (August, 2011). The voices of educators: Examining the experiences of military children in public schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Estrada, J.N., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Gilreath, T.D., & De Pedro, K.T. (April 2011). Questioning theoretical stereotypes on gang membership: Examining prevalence rates across California schools and geographical regions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Estrada, J.N., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Gilreath, T.D., & De Pedro, K.T. (April 2011). Merging gang and school violence theoretical models: Examining predictors of gang membership within California schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- De Pedro, K.T., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Estrada, J.N., & Smith, G. D. (April 2011). A review of research on military families and schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Astor, R. A., De Pedro, K.T., Atuel, H.R., & Pineda, D. (April 2011). Building capacity for military-connected schools: Research and application. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the DoD/USDA Military Family Resilience, Chicago, IL.

Estrada, J.N., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., & Gilreath, T.D. (2011, January). Integrating gang and school violence theoretical paradigms: A statewide quantitative examination of variables that increase and decrease gang membership within California secondary schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research Annual, Tampa, FL.

Gilreath, T.D., Estrada, J.N., & Astor, R.A. (November 2010) Patterns of substance use among adolescents in California schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

Military-Connected Student Focus (Accepted)

Gilreath, T.D., Astor, R.A., Pineda, D., & Atuel, H.R. (November 2014). Associations between family member deployment and the co-occurrence of substance use and negative affect among adolescents. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, New Orleans, LA.

Military-Connected Student Focus (Under Review)

Esqueda, M.C., De Pedro, K.T., & Atuel, H.R. (under review). Examining the roles and responsibilities of postsecondary institutions after a decade of war. Paper submitted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

De Pedro, K.T., Garcia, E., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Pineda, D., & Lester, P. (under review). Examining the implementation of FOCUS skill building groups on the emotional well-being and resilience of military students in public schools. Paper submitted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Nhien, C., Benbenishty, R., Datnow, A., Holtzman, C., Guerra, A.W., & Chung, L. (under review). Overcoming challenges of military students: Connecting undergraduate students with military-connected schools in San Diego county. Paper submitted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Atuel, H.R., Benbenishty, R., & Nhien, C. (under review). 'Because Nice Matters': A study of an anti-bullying intervention in a military-connected school district. Paper submitted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Berkowitz, R., Benbenishty, R., & Nhien, C. (under review). Learning together: Supporting military students through collaborative learning experiences. Paper submitted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Military-Connected Student Focus (Invited Conference Presentations)

- Astor, R.A. (February 2013). American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Atuel, H.R. & Pineda, D. (June 2012). Military Child Education Coalition Scientific Advisory Board Meeting and Annual Conference, Grapevine, TX.
- Pineda, D. (June 2012). California Board School of Social Work Association Meeting, San Diego, CA.
- Astor, R. A. (May 2012) National Joint Conference with French Minister of Education, Heads of National Education Unions, and French Parliament Members. Sorbonne (University of Paris). French Ministry of Education. Paris, France.
- Astor, R.A. (May 2012). National Joint Conference with Chilean Minister of Education representatives, Heads of City Education Unions, and five Chilean Universities, Santiago, Chile.
- Atuel, H.R., Weiss, E., & Miranda, C. (April 2012). USC School of Social Work's Families and Children Concentration Meeting, Los Angeles, CA.
- Astor, R.A. (July 2011). National Academies – Institute of Medicine, Irvine, CA.
- Astor, R.A. (June 2011). U.S. Department of Education Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Astor, R.A. (May 2011). National Joint Conference with French Minister of Education, Heads of National Education Unions, and French Parliament Members. Sorbonne (University of Paris) French Ministry of Education. Paris, France.
- Astor, R.A. (April 2011). U.S. Department of Education S3 Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Proposals

Military-Connected Student Focus (Funded)

DoDEA Educational Partnership Program

Astor (PI) 2013-2017

Department of Defense Education Activity

Welcoming Practices that Address Transition Needs of Military Students in Public Schools (Transitions into Welcoming Schools Consortium)

F31 Rodriguez (PI) 2011-2014

National Institute of Mental Health

Parental Military Deployment and Adolescent Mental/Behavioral Health

Role: Astor (Mentor)

Military-Connected Student Focus (Under Review)

Social and Behavioral Context Datnow (UCSD, PI)

Institute of Education Studies

Partners at Learning in Military-Connected Schools

Role: Astor (USC, PI)

Military-Connected Student Focus (In progress for submission January 2014)

Resubmission --Social and Behavioral Context Lester (UCLA, PI) 2014-2017

Institute of Education Studies

Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS) on Academic Outcomes in Military Children

Role: Astor (USC, PI), Gilreath (USC, Co-I), and Benbenishty (Consultant)

Military-Connected Student Focus (Scored and Unfunded)

R21 Gilreath (PI) 2013-2015

National Institute of Mental Health

Development of a military salient stress measure and links to adolescent drug use

Role: Astor (Co-I)

Social and Behavioral Context Lester (UCLA, PI) 2013-2016

Institute of Education Studies

Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS) on Academic Outcomes in Military Children

Role: Astor (USC, PI), Gilreath (USC, Co-I), and Benbenishty (Consultant)

R21 Cederbaum (PI) 2013-2015

National Institute of Mental Health

Exploring Race/Ethnic Differences in Military Family Functioning and Service Use

Role: Astor (Co-I) Jaycox (RAND, PI) 2012-2016

Department of Defense

Enhancing Military Child and Family Resilience: A School System Approach

Role: Astor (USC, PI) and Benbenishty (Consultant)