

ENLISTING PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Schools on U.S. military bases use proven strategies that are helping to close the achievement gap.



Involved parents often volunteer as tutors and mentors in base school classrooms.

Every weekday, more than 102,000 young Americans in grades K-12 go to school on military bases in the U.S. and abroad. Students attending these public schools operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity aren't children of privilege. Half are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Few of their parents have more than a high school education, 49 percent are from minority groups, and up to one-third of the students leave during the year because their parents move. Nevertheless, these schools are posting high levels of academic success and are closing the achievement gap.

Fourth and eighth grade students in Department of Defense (DoD) schools scored at, or near, the top in last year's National Assessment of Educational Progress reading and math tests. African-American students in DoD schools scored an average of 31 points higher on their verbal SATs than their civilian counterparts and 21 points higher on their math SATs last year. Ninety-four percent of DoD students graduate, and most go to college.

Why the difference?

Clearly, DoD schools enjoy some built-in advantages—parental involvement is required for most service members, for example, and per-pupil funding is \$3,500 above the national average.

Fundamentally, however, their winning formula rests on consistently using the same proven ingredients that make most other successful schools work—high standards, good discipline, quality tests linked to a rigorous curriculum, and well-prepared and respected teachers. This foundation, already working in many urban schools, is the centerpiece of DoD schools' success. It's the right strategy for *all* our schools.

FACTS:

Department of Defense schools share many of the hallmarks of other high-performing public schools, including:

- *A standards-based program that sets the same goals for all students but provides flexibility in how to teach the material.*
- *Regular testing closely tied to the curriculum.*
- *Well-prepared teachers. Unlike many high-poverty urban schools, DoD schools have few uncertified teachers, and they provide ongoing professional development to help teachers update their skills and knowledge.*



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*American Federation of Teachers
Sandra Feldman, President*

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