



## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DoDEA Educational Partnerships Awards Grant to Morongo Unified School District**

**ARLINGTON, VA** –The Department of Defense Education Activity awarded a \$2 million grant to Morongo Unified School District (MUSD), in 29 Palms, CA through an grant program aimed at assisting schools that serve children of military families. The Invitational Grant Program is specifically focused on schools that support installations with frequent and/or sustained deployments, or who are located in remote locations.

“Morongo Unified School District was a perfect fit for this grant initiative” said Kathy Facon, Chief of DoDEA's Educational Partnerships Branch. “Students face unique challenges due to the unique mission and remote location of the installation.”

The school district serves students whose families are stationed at 29 Palms Marine Corps Installation, home of the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC). Units stationed there have deployed every six months with many on their 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Iraq deployments. The school district serves 9,630 students with 2,162 military connected students or 23% of the student population in its 17 schools.

"This grant will help all of the students in the MUSD, and it is a great example of what can happen when the military partners with their local school districts," said Jim Ricker, the MCAGCC Community Plans and Liaison Officer. "We started forging our ties in June 2007 and what we have achieved so far is truly amazing. The sky is the limit for the future."

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## **DoDEA Partnership Grants/222**

The Morongo Unified School District's grant, *Challenging Students to Achieve at Higher Levels* will provide professional development and expand learning opportunities for all students.

The initiative will raise student achievement by providing greater learning opportunities for students and decreasing special education referrals and placements. Almost 15% of MUSD students are in special education — significantly higher than the national average.

"The Morongo Unified School District is thrilled to have received this DoDEA grant," said Tom Baumgarten, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services. "This funding will allow us to increase the educational opportunities for students across the district by expanding the course selections for the most advanced students. This grant also will allow us to provide a greater level of support for our struggling students through a variety of school-based interventions."

"This is the first year DoDEA has been able to execute our grant program and it's very gratifying to be able to offer assistance to the schools that are educating our military's children." said Dr. Shirley Miles, Director of DoDEA. "We are looking forward to seeing how the districts implement the programs they've developed. We know that all children in the grant recipient districts will benefit from these awards."

DoDEA's aim is to enhance the education of military students, but funds may be used to raise student achievement for all students.

The National Defense Authorization Act (2007) provides DoDEA the authority to expand its reach to the approximately 92% of military students that do not attend DoDEA Schools and allows DoDEA to award grants to fund programs that address that will enhance student learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development at military-connected schools

DoDEA consists of the Department of Defense Dependents Schools located overseas, and the Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools located in the U.S. and its territories and possessions. DoDEA provides education to eligible DoD military and civilian dependents from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. DoDEA also provides support and resources to Local Education Activities throughout the U.S. that serve children of military families.