

**2024 PETE TAYLOR PARTNERSHIP
OF EXCELLENCE AWARD**



MCEC[®]



Lt. Gen. H. G. "Pete" Taylor (retired) was one of the founders of MCEC – and a military parent, too. The award named in his honor recognizes successful partnerships and projects that reflect his belief that "goodness starts at the local level," and ultimately benefit military-connected children.

The K-12 award may represent a single project in which a military installation and one or more school districts participated, or it may be a summation of the entire program between a military installation and the school districts serving an installation.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2024 Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award!

Bay Area Education Alliance – Florida



PARTNERS:

- Naval Support Activity Panama City
- Tyndall Air Force Base
- Bay District Schools
- Florida State University at Panama City
- Gulf Coast State College
- Collegiate High School at Florida State University

It's inspiring to see such a robust collaboration focused on supporting military-connected students and their families through the Bay Area Education Alliance. The efforts of Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Panama City, Bay District Schools, Florida State University, and Gulf Coast State College showcase a strong commitment to providing exceptional educational opportunities.

The Elevate Bay Mentoring Program's involvement of over 55 military-affiliated mentors and their significant contributions of over 2,500 volunteer hours and support demonstrate the power of mentorship in shaping the educational experiences and opportunities for students. Recognition such as the 18 Purple Star Schools Award and the provision of Military Honor Cords to over 300 students further solidify Bay County's reputation as a military-friendly community, honoring the dedication and sacrifice of military families and their students. Events like the STEMFEST that serve over 400 people and the Military Showcase hosting 500 students not only offer valuable learning experiences but also serve to highlight the diverse career paths available in STEM fields within the military. It's fantastic to hear that families from neighboring areas are willing to travel to participate, indicating the impact and reach of these initiatives.

Overall, the Bay Area Education Alliance's commitment to putting "Students First" and continually expanding programs and opportunities are commendable and undoubtedly making a positive difference in the lives of military-connected students and the broader community.

Military-Connected Youth Process Action Team – Virginia



PARTNERS:

- Fort Belvoir
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- George Mason University
- Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative, George Mason University

The Fairfax County Military-Connected Youth Process Action Team supports military-connected students and their families as they transition in and out of Fairfax County Public Schools.

Initiated by FCPS, the team is a partnership between local schools, the United States Army Fort Belvoir, and George Mason University's Military, Veterans, & Families Initiative. Representatives from each organization, along with military family members of Pre-K through 12th-grade students, meet regularly to identify needs, discuss strategies, and plan events to ensure a positive experience for military-connected youth in Fairfax County Public Schools.

The Process Action Team also ensures that school faculty and staff are equipped to meet the unique academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of military-connected youth through ongoing professional development opportunities.

From planning division-wide events like Purple-Up Day, to setting up procedures for registering new military students, and training peer-led transition teams, the Fairfax County Military-Connected Youth Process Action Team is a strong partnership that benefits military-connected youth, their families, and the school personnel who support them.

Count on Me – Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas



PARTNERS:

- Fort Cavazos
- Columbus Air Force Base
- Killeen Independent School District
- Madison City Schools District
- Temple Independent School District
- Lowndes County Schools
- Meadows Elementary School
- Liberty Middle School
- Caledonia Elementary School
- Meridith-Dunbar Early Childhood Academy

Our partnership, “Count on Me,” formed in 2015 between Liberty Middle School, Meadows Elementary School, and Meadows’ Adopt-A-School Unit, is dedicated to supporting military families and fostering academic growth. Through initiatives like installing Free Little Libraries, we strive to offer comfort and stability to military families during transitions. This year, we extended our partnership to include Meridith-Dunbar Early Childhood Academy in Temple, TX, Columbus AFB in Columbus, MS, and Caledonia Elementary School in Caledonia, MS.

Our impact extends beyond our communities, reaching diverse military populations in Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi. Activities like Read Across America and Family STEM Night enhance students’ socialization and critical thinking skills. We’ve also established Free Little Libraries in multiple states, ensuring access to literature for military families. This year, we added an initiative with the goal of supporting children facing health challenges within military communities.

Locally, we honor our nation’s veterans through heartfelt Veterans Day Programs and monthly BINGO sessions at Floyd E. “Tut” Fann State Veterans Home, fostering intergenerational connections. Additionally, we support military-connected students with events like Military Child Appreciation Week and participation in Wreaths Across America ceremonies. Our commitment goes further with initiatives like our “Dandelion Gala” and students’ involvement in the VFW Patriot’s Pen Essay Contest, amplifying our dedication to honoring veterans nationally. Our partnership remains steadfast in its mission to uplift, honor, and empower military families, reflecting our deep commitment to serving those who serve our nation.

PreApprenticeship: Operation Future Force (OFF) - Alaska



PARTNERS:

- Eielson AFB
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
- Alaska Air National Guard 168th Air Guard
- Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High School
- Anderson Crawford Elementary School

In a collaborative effort launched in 2010, Eielson Air Force Base (AFB), the Eielson AFB School Liaison program, the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Guard, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District joined forces to create a one-of-a-kind PreApprenticeship program that is still going strong today!

This program targets high school students, equipping them with valuable career exploration opportunities in Air Force specialties. The program exposes students to a wide range of career fields, including logistics, public affairs, culinary arts, law enforcement, civil engineering, emergency management, air traffic control, aviation mechanics, piloting, physical therapy, and even early childhood education. Additionally, military squadron commanders play an active role by encouraging over 140 members to participate as mentors. Through this mentorship program, high school students gain real-world experience and insights from seasoned professionals in their chosen field of interest.

The PreApprenticeship program's impactful approach has garnered significant attention. Due to its success, the program has been adopted by at least two other Air Force bases, solidifying its reputation as a model program. Furthermore, the program's reach has extended beyond the Air Force, as the Alaska Air Guard has joined the program. Fort Wainwright Army is currently in the approval process to implement a similar program. While the program serves as a potential recruitment tool for the military, its primary focus remains on empowering high school students to make informed decisions about their futures.

Semper Instructis - Florida



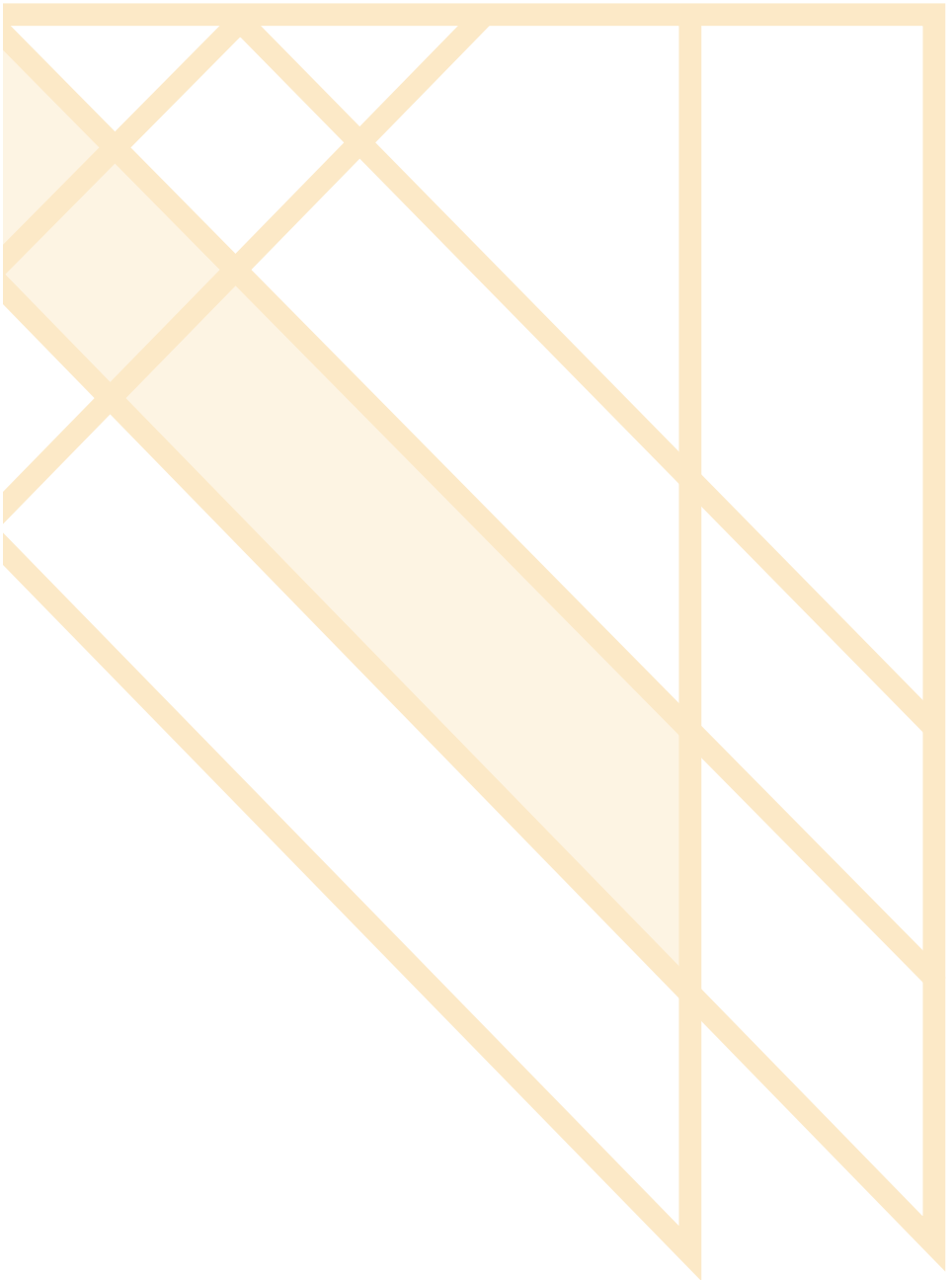
PARTNERS:

- Coast Guard Sector Key West
- Monroe County School District
- Sigsbee Charter School

Sigsbee Charter (SCS) is a K-8 school with a mission specifically focused on creating an innovative curriculum to meet the unique needs of military children. The school embraces 50% military-dependent students from all five branches of the Armed Forces and has an established learning partnership, Semper Instructis, with United States Coast Guard Sector Key West.

The partners collaborate to improve self-efficacy and participation in STEM for military-connected students. The partnership includes co-authoring a curriculum that supports students' social-emotional needs with a STEM-based Problem-Based Learning (PBL) curriculum. Through a 2022 DoDEA grant, students study STEM-based PBL tasks that deepen community and military partnerships, immersing them in the local marine sanctuary and providing them with experiences demonstrating STEM applications in military careers. Students are connected to their community and mentored by service members. The partnership also provides students with unplugged, engaging activities that improve their mental wellness. At the same time, mentorships offer opportunities for young service members to learn how to interact with youth, connect to the community, and enjoy the benefits of their volunteerism and community service.

In April, SCS and their USCG partners hosted a DoDEA dual region meeting to showcase the co-taught curriculum and partnership. Florida's Lieutenant Governor Nunez visited the students at this time to recognize SCS as a model Purple Star School of Distinction. The partnership was also featured when the Florida Department of Education asked the principal to present to all Purple Star Schools.



MCEC® GLOBAL TRAINING SUMMIT



Learn more about the Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award and explore past winning partnerships here: