Children of military personnel who have been deployed for at least 19 months are more likely to see a drop in academic performance and an increase in behavioral problems, according to a Rand Corporation study conducted for the U.S. Army.

The study of 44,000 public school students in North Carolina and Washington state examined the impact of parent deployment on reading and math standardized test scores. No DoDEA students were included in the study.

Children of parents who have been deployed a cumulative total of at least 19 months (consecutively or non-consecutively) were found to have slightly lower scores than children of those who deployed less or not at all.

Only children in elementary and middle school grades were found to be impacted. High school students showed no impact.

Additionally, some children of deployed personnel struggled with homework completion and attendance and educators in the schools studied reported that some families of deployed personnel began to place less emphasis on the quality of their child's academic performance.

The study speculated that, in addition to worries about the deployed parent(s), changes in the family dynamic at home create stress on students as they deal with new situations and new responsibilities. The study recommends the military increase services to help military families cope with such stresses.

FEA President Michael Priser, a school psychologist, says the study validates what DoDEA educators have known for years: military students face unique problems and require educators who are sensitive to their situations.

"The fact that DoDEA test scores have remained stable and even increased over the past decade, despite the fact that virtually all of our students have had one or more parents deployed way longer than the 19-month period cited in the study, shows what an excellent job our educators are doing in a very difficult situation," Priser says.

The study, entitled “Effects of Soldiers’ Deployment on Children's Academic Performance and Behavioral Health,” can be found at www.rand.org.
When Marilee Fitzgerald, the Acting Director of DoDEA, met with the FEA Board of Directors in October, I was impressed by what she said, but even more impressed by what she wore.

No, I’m not talking about her business attire; I’m talking about the FEA “Maximize the Learning” button that adorned her lapel.

Our message is getting through!

During her four-hour discussion with the FEA Board, Ms. Fitzgerald repeatedly stated that she hears the concerns FEA has raised about the number of new initiatives coming from DoDEA Headquarters and the negative impact those increased burdens have on instructional time for students.

She told the Board that reducing the number of new initiatives to a manageable size will be a priority for her and she pledged to preserve instructional time.

To emphasize her point, Ms. Fitzgerald tapped the Maximize the Learning button she wore and said that message will help her to reflect upon how any new initiative being considered will impact learning in the classroom.

To be certain, FEA still has a long way to go on the flow of new initiatives, but recognition of the problem is a big first step.

For the Director of DoDEA schools to come to the FEA Board of Directors and acknowledge the negative impact of too many initiatives is refreshing, to say the least.

Of course, the proof will be in the pudding, and FEA will not stop promoting our Maximize the Learning message and our goal of maximizing the amount of time available for classroom instruction.

The new DoDEA Community Strategic Plan currently being worked on will be an important litmus test of management’s commitment to making any new initiatives more beneficial to education professionals and their students.

Ms. Fitzgerald told the Board that DoDEA will work with FEA to draft the Community Strategic Plan in stages, with each stage being shared with faculty and staff for feedback so that it has buy-in from DoDEA stakeholders prior to its release.

This differs sharply from past practice, in which strategic plans were modified by DoDEA Headquarters personnel and used to impose new programs and initiatives on staff with little or no input.

I hope this spirit of cooperation and collaboration can become a new model for labor-management relations in DoDEA.

For now, it remains important for every FEA member – and anyone else who agrees with our goal of boosting instructional time – to continue spreading the Maximize the Learning message.

Wear the lapel pin sent to you (see your FRS if you did not receive one)!

Display the “Maximize the Learning” posters sent to you via your FRS and in the August 2011 FEA Journal newsletter (or go to www.feaonline.org/maximizethelearning to download the poster)!

DoDEA (as well as students, parents and the military community) is hearing our message loud and clear. Now it is up to all of us to ensure that message does not taper off before the problem is fully solved. Our students deserve nothing less!
While much of the country's attention is understandably focused right now on the economy, a program I saw on television recently reminded me of the incredible sacrifices of the military families we support and the importance of never, ever letting those families down.

The program focused on the death of a single military member and showed how such tragedies are handled by the military: how the body is transported for burial, how the soldier is honored by his or her comrades, and, most relevant to our members' roles as DoDEA employees, how the news of that soldier's death reaches and impacts the family members who are left behind.

I was incredibly moved by the sorrow of the military family profiled and at the same time uplifted by their resiliency and strength.

I know you, as a DoDEA employee, don't need to see such examples on television. You see them everyday and know as well as anyone how military families – and particularly military dependents – face the tragedy of losing loved ones. More often, of course, these families and dependents are dealing with a parent who is deployed in harm's way: wondering if that person is OK and trying not to think the worst.

As I reflect upon this program, I am more aware than ever that the work our members do everyday is incredibly important in the lives of military families.

Certainly, educators everywhere play a huge role in their communities and particularly in the lives of their students, but the stresses and circumstances faced by our students and their families give the work you do an added importance.

We must never forget or take for granted the honor we have to serve the military community. Instead, let us use the brave example of those families we serve as a constant reminder of the importance of going “above and beyond,” as they do in the service of their country.

For our part, FEA is proud of the work we do, advocating for more instruction time and fewer distractions to keep you from the important work you do.

Through our “Maximize the Learning” campaign, FEA is making the case to DoDEA management that faculty and staff need to have fewer mandates and new initiatives imposed upon them so that you can spend more of your time achieving your mission of providing an outstanding education to the military dependents placed in your care.

Furthermore, the “Maximize the Learning” campaign seeks improvements in the Professional Development opportunities DoDEA provides to you, so that you are even better prepared and more capable of succeeding in your job.

Our members are professional educators. You would do an outstanding job in any circumstances and push yourself to always do better regardless of where you worked. But your excellence is augmented by the knowledge that you don’t work in just any community: you serve those who serve us all.

In my years working for FEA members, I have heard and seen hundreds of examples of DoDEA faculty and staff going the extra mile. You put up with many hardships and difficulties yourself that are not faced by your counterparts in “regular” public schools because you know the importance of the work you do and the community you serve.

What you do is so very important to the lives of so many. FEA will continue to honor your work, and the duty of military families you serve, by always advocating for the best possible educational environment.
Retired Membership Is a Priority
by Trudy Pollard
FEA Retired Representative

The motto for NEA-Retired is *Now More Than Ever, The Commitment Continues*.

The number of FEA Retired members grows every year as more and more retirees recognize the importance and value of keeping FEA and NEA working for them even after they leave DoDEA.

Whether it’s NEA publications for retirees such as *This Active Life*, FEA legal resources assisting with debt claims against retirees, or NEA lobbyists working on issues such as GPO-WEP and protecting Social Security/Medicare, the benefits of retired membership in NEA/FEA go well beyond your time as a working professional.

Have you checked out the Retired Members page at www.feaonline.org? Look under Member Resources. You will find retirement links and articles (including information on getting a DoD retirement ID card), member benefits for retired, and NEA/FEA retired and pre-retired membership forms.

- **Retired members**: what would you like to see added to the Web site? Let us know by e-mailing fea@feaonline.org. We would like to connect with you and build a stronger and more active FEA Retired group.
- **Pre-retired members**: what information would you like the retired members to share with you? Send your suggestions to fea@feaonline.org.

To join FEA as a Retired or a Pre-Retired member, go to www.feaonline.org/join/why/retired.htm.

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The Other Big Event in DC in 2012

Wanted: Members to Run for RA Delegate

Sure 2012 is an election year and most Americans will be focused on the White House, but for FEA and NEA members, 2012 means we’re returning to the District of Columbia for our Annual Meetings and the NEA Representative Assembly (RA).

Any Active Member in FEA can run as a delegate to the NEA RA, being held at the Washington DC Convention Center July 1-5, 2012.

If elected, you will have the honor or representing your fellow FEA members as you discuss, debate and vote on policies and procedures that determine how NEA functions. You’ll also be voting to elect NEA officers for the next three years.

Furthermore, while in DC for the NEA RA, you will be attending the FEA Annual Membership Meeting, being held June 29 and 30, 2012. This meeting is open to all FEA members, Active and Retired, and gives members an opportunity to question and hear directly from the FEA Board of Directors and staff on issues affecting them.

Look for information from your FEA Area Director about how to run as a delegate to the NEA RA.

FEA and NEA are completely democratic bodies. We need active participation from members like you to succeed.

Run for a seat and have an impact!
NEA Foundation Teaching Award Honors Teaching Excellence

2011 FEA Award Nominee Visits China With Fellow Awardees

Visits to schools in three different Chinese cities this past summer made very different impressions on FEA member Sally Jones, but that’s to be expected, she says.

“China is an amazing country, full of contradictions.”

Jones went to China as part of a group of nominees for the NEA Foundation’s Award for Teaching Excellence. The 10-day trip was sponsored by the Pearson Foundation and led by guides from the Education Foundation.

Jones and her fellow nominees visited Chinese schools and spoke with faculty members at schools in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Each location was unique.

The first school visited, in Beijing, was not state sponsored and students were not likely to attend university after completing their nine years of mandatory education. “The teacher described the students as ‘lacking motivation,’” Jones says.

The second school, in Shanghai, was an experimental school with an emphasis on educating the whole child.

Last was an elementary school in Hong Kong, where Jones saw high levels of involvement from students, parents and faculty.

“As a teacher, this has expanded my horizons and my students will benefit from all that I have learned and seen,” says Jones, adding she will use photos and information she gathered on the trip to educate her students about China.

“It was an amazing experience.”

Sally Jones, an English/Language Arts teacher from Wiesbaden Middle School in Germany, traveled to China this summer to learn more about their schools.

Lejeune Educator Honored as FEA’s 2012 Teaching Excellence Nominee

Wendy Woodworth, an educator at Lejeune High School, Camp Lejeune, NC, is FEA’s 2012 nominee for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence.

The award, to be presented at a gala dinner in Washington, DC, this February, recognizes outstanding educators as nominated by NEA State affiliates, such as FEA.

“Because I am fully aware of how many educators in DoDEA are more than worthy of this award, I am honored and humbled by my selection,” says Woodworth, who teaches Honors World History, Literature and Shakespeare and also serves as President of the Lejeune Education Association.

As was the case with 2011 award nominees, Woodworth and her fellow 2012 nominees have the opportunity to visit China on an information-gathering tour.

“I am beyond excited about being able to go to China,” she says.

“I hope to return ready to share an increased knowledge of Chinese history, culture and government, as well as a better understanding of China’s impact on global politics, business and the economy.”
NEA/FEA Offer Resources to Help You Deal With Bullying in School

Students who are bullied are far more likely to do poorly on exams, not do their homework, skip school, suffer from depression and, in the most extreme cases, commit suicide.

NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me! campaign seeks to educate Association members about the signs of bullying and offer information and advice on how to deal with it.

Learn more about what bullying is and how you can stop it by reviewing the information on this page and at www.nea.org/bullyfree.

Common Types of Bullying and Harassment:

**BULLYING** is systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more students. Bullying is not just child's play, but a terrifying experience many American school children face every day. It can be as direct as teasing, hitting or threatening, or as indirect as in rumors, exclusion, or manipulation. Bullying can no longer be explained away – as some adults are inclined to do – as a normal part of growing up. Bullying in children can develop into sexual harassment in older students.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT** at school is unwanted and unwelcomed behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's rights to receive an equal educational opportunity.

**CYBER BULLYING** is the term applied to bullying over the Internet, via e-mail, text messaging, and similar technological modes of communication. Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression. This form of bullying is more intense as it can occur around the clock, and the text or images can be widely disseminated, well beyond the school grounds.

**SEXTING** is the term combining the words sex and texting. It applies to the act of creating, sending, posting and disseminating sexually suggestive text messages, pictures or videos of oneself or others. Sexting generally is done via cell phones, but teens also use computers, web cams, digital cameras and other electronic devices.
Bully Free: It Starts With Me!

NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me! campaign (www.nea.org/bullyfree) offers these six ways to start making your school Bully Free!

• Let your students know that you are available to listen and help them. Every student needs to know that there is at least one adult in the school building they can go to if they are being bullied or know someone who is.

• Talk with your colleagues about the NEA Bully Free: It Starts With Me! campaign and encourage them to join and become a visible caring adult. Let them know that you want them to join and make this a school-wide program.

• Tell your principal that you’ve joined the NEA Bully Free: It Starts With Me! campaign and that you’re a visible caring adult for bullied students in your school. Encourage him/her to join you by supporting the use of NEA resources and the development of a formal school-based anti-bullying program.

• Locate and understand your school policy on bullying. If your school doesn’t have one, locate and know your district policy, and contact the NEA as we have resources to assist you in working with your school to develop a strong, comprehensive policy.

• Reach out to your community. Addressing bullying cannot and should not be done by the school alone. Parents, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and community leaders have to be involved so that students feel safe in both their school and their community.

• Visit www.nea.org/bullyfree often. There you will find updated resources and materials to assist you in your efforts to address bullying and create a safe and supportive environment for every student.

DoDEA and HHS Join Forces to Launch Stop Bullying Now! Campaign in DoDEA Schools

DoDEA Schools are not immune to the threat of bullying.

To help fight the problems associated with bullying, DoDEA has joined with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to institute an anti-bullying campaign in all DoD schools.

The HHS campaign “Stop Bullying Now! Take a Stand. Lend a Hand,” will help unify efforts and build a common understanding of, and expectations for, DoDEA’s commitment and action to prevent bullying. The materials - posters, web sites, videos and handouts - will complement existing bullying prevention programs in DoDEA schools.

Common Types of Bullying and Harassment:

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SEXTING is the term combining the words sex and texting. It applies to the act of creating, sending, posting and disseminating sexually suggestive text messages, pictures or videos of oneself or others. Sexting generally is done via cell phones, but teens also use computers, webcams, digital cameras and other electronic devices to get to the Internet.

Find more information on the issue of bullying – including tip sheets for dealing with various forms of bullying and training materials to help you identify and prevent bullying – by going to www.nea.org/bullyfree
Dealing With Deployment

Don’t Be Afraid To Mention The Deployed Parent To Students

During deployment, it is important to acknowledge the student’s situation without creating added stress on the student or family, says Ramstein Intermediate School Guidance Counselor Noreen Mantini.

“It is helpful to be warm and encouraging and to affirm the child’s feelings if he or she seems angry, frustrated or sad,” says Mantini. “Teachers shouldn’t be afraid to mention the deployed parent.”

Communication between the student and deployed parent is very beneficial, Mantini says, which is why many teachers will have their students draw pictures or write letters or e-mails to the deployed parent.

Children have a different perspective on and understanding of a parent’s deployment than do adults, Mantini says. Younger children, in particular, tend to think they are the cause of certain events they experience.

“Separation is one of the most basic developmental issues a child faces in her or his life,” Mantini says. “Our heightened awareness and support could make the positive difference in the child’s growth and development.”

It is also important to note that the stresses and adjustments of deployment continue even after the parent has returned home. Children and adults continue to grow and change while they are apart and this requires some adjustment, Mantini points out.

“The family may be even stronger when reunited,” she says, “but it is never exactly the same as it was prior to the deployment.”

Small Groups, Activities Foster Dialogue

LaQuana Reaves, a Guidance Counselor at Johnson Primary School, Camp Lejeune, suggests using small group settings and playful activities to help young people deal with their fears and anxieties for a deployed parent.

“Young children may feel the deployed parent is going away because of something they did. These feelings may be reflected in anger or hostility,” says Reaves. “As an education professional, it is important to provide students with encouragement to assist them with feelings of guilt.”

At her school, Reaves leads Club USA, a small group of five to seven children that uses interactive activities to help children communicate their thoughts and concerns.

Reaves offers the following tips for her fellow educators to use when working with children of deployed personnel:

• Encourage students to communicate so an educator can validate their feelings
• Provide small group settings to assist with support
• Utilize deployment calendars, counting down until the deployed parent returns home
• Use drawing activities to help educators to be attuned to any emotional or behavioral concerns
• Look for crafts and other project activities you can use to foster communication
• Use deployment dolls, the deployed parent’s worn clothing or uniform items for dress-up play to provide opportunities for the student to discuss the deployed parent
Don’t Wait Until the Last Minute: Order Your Read Across America Hats and Materials Now!

Every year you promise yourself “This will be the year I get one of those great Cat-in-the-Hat hats for Read Across America day on March 2.”

But, inevitably, things come up and distractions pile on. Next thing you know, it’s late February and you’re trying to stretch out an old red stocking cap, wondering if you can paint some white stripes on it.

Well, not this year! This is the year you go to www.nea.org/readacross

There, you will find the Seuss Store (also known as the ‘Cat-alog’), where you can order hats and other materials now, so they arrive in plenty of time for March 2.

You will also find lots of tips and ideas for your reading events. You can even order the 2012 NEA’s Read Across America calendar, full of more suggestions for making reading fun throughout the year.

If you are overseas, when checking out from the store be sure to enter “APO” or “FPO” under “City” and “AE” or “AP” under “State”, and choose the “First Class Mail” shipping option.

Be a Super Smart Seuss Supporter; Go to www.nea.org/readacross today!

The NEA Health Information Network (NEA HIN)’s mission is to improve the health and safety of the school community through disseminating information that empowers school professionals and positively impacts the lives of their students. NEA HIN:

• helps to improve the quality of the environment in our schools by addressing problems of mold, poor air quality and other unhealthy conditions
• educates NEA members about health problems like arthritis, diabetes, communicable diseases such as flu and stomach bugs, heart disease and others
• works to bring healthy food to children in school
• helps kids stay safer online
• provides school professionals with resources and tools to help them deal with nature-caused and man-made emergencies

Examples of NEA HIN programs and services include:

- bnetsavvy.org: Helping educators, students and parents better understand the risks and benefits of Internet use.
- Health Issues: Providing resource guides on topics such as mental and physical health, vaccinations, and cancer.
- School Safety: Information available includes crisis guide, school and community safety, and air quality.

Find These and Other Valuable Resources at www.neahin.org
Know the Facts to Make the Most of Health Benefits Open Season

by Paula S. Jakub, RHU
Executive Vice President, American Foreign Service Protective Association

Federal Employees Benefits Open Season is upon us and it is especially important to review your coverage to make sure it will meet your needs in 2012.

The average premium increase in 2012 for employees and retirees is 3.8%.

New FEHB premiums will take effect the first full pay period of January 2012. Program enrollees who have Self Only coverage will pay an average of $2.32 more bi-weekly, while those with Self and Family coverage will pay an average of $6.18 more bi-weekly.

Since plans vary in their changes, it is important to know what your particular plan is doing. We encourage you to read carefully Section 2 How we change for 2012 in your 2012 plan brochure.

Do not rely on premium costs alone to make your health plan decision. Things like extra deductibles and plan allowances for services, especially overseas, could end up costing you extra money.

Customer service, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for claims reimbursement and internet claims submission can be very important for employees serving both stateside and in foreign countries.

A word about FSAFEDS: The program allows pre-tax reimbursement for eligible costs not covered by health plans, such as copays, deductibles, dental, eyeglass, etc. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs must have a doctor’s prescription for reimbursement. You can contribute up to $5,000 again in 2012. Many plans offer claims crossover to FSAFEDS, meaning the plan will send the information onto the FSAFEDS vendor (SHPS) after they process the claim. Be aware that you must re-enroll each year, which occurs during Open Season. For more information, go to www.FSAFEDS.com or call 1-888-372-3337.

Emphasis of the 2012 FEHB Program

- Patient compliance with treatment and safety -
  - Patients stay current with treatments; avoid gaps in care
  - Plans’ Response: Disease Management and Incentive Programs
  - Some do more, such as pre-disease alerts and monitoring treatment compliance after hospitalizations
- “Going Green” / Health Information Technology
  - Electronic communications and interactive Web assistance
  - Plans’ Response: Brochures can be downloaded; wellness libraries, interactive web sites
- Generic drug spend- Costs kept down by using generics drugs
  - Plans’ Response: Education, benefit design changes
  - FYI: In the next few years, several brand-name drugs will go off patent, resulting in less expensive equivalents in the market:
    - 2011: Levaquin, Lipitor
    - 2012: Clarinex, Plavix, Singularair
    - 2013: Cymbalta, Fosamax Plus D
    - 2014: Nexium
- Employee health and wellness - Promote Healthy lifestyles to prevent onset of chronic diseases
  - Plans’ Response – online well-being and coaching programs

Federal Employees Benefits Open Season dates are November 14 through December 12, 2011. Employees can make selections/changes in their FEHBP, FSAFEDS and/or FEDVIP.

Get more FEHB information at www.opm.gov/insure/health/
Questions About NEA Member Benefits? Call or Go Online!

The NEA Member Benefits program provides many programs and services to FEA members. Please contact Member Benefits with questions about any of their services using the following toll-free numbers in applicable areas:

**Stateside**
1-800-637-4636

**Overseas**
First dial the AT&T Direct Access Code
In Germany and UK 0800-2255288
In Japan 00539-111

Then dial Member Benefits at 800-893-0396

And don’t forget the Member Benefits Web site. You can access information on all of NEA-MB’s programs, get current rates on CDs and investment funds, and sign up for other services.

www.neamb.com

The JOURNAL is a quarterly publication of the Federal Education Association. Contributions, letters, photographs and other submissions to the JOURNAL are welcome and should be sent to the address below.

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December

Health Insurance Open Season Ends

December 12

Pearl Harbor Day

On the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Japanese navy attacked the United States' naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which resulted in the United States becoming militarily involved in World War II. For resources, see Remembering Pearl Harbor on the National Geographic website (www.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor/)

December 15

Bill of Rights Adoption Day

The Bill of Rights is the name by which the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution are known. Introduced in 1789, they came into effect on December 15, 1791. For resources, see Bill of Rights Institute (www.billofrightsinstitute.org/)

December 17

Anniversary of Wright Brothers’ Flight

The Wright Brothers forever changed human travel at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 1903, with their powered flight, which traveled 120 feet. For resources, see Wright Brothers (www.nasm.si.edu/wrightbrothers/index_full.cfm)

The month of December includes several noteworthy events and anniversaries that you may wish to incorporate into your students' learning. Here are some resources to help:

Teachable Moments

Use this ID Number to Log in to www.feaonline.org

Calendar of Events

January

Health Insurance Open Season Ends

2-7

Conference on National Leadership
NEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Leadership Conference
Crystal City, VA

December

We would like to thank you for your support.

F.E.A. Journal

First Class Mail