Sullivans School supports teacher observation hours

Story and photo by Steve Parker, The Sullivans School Public Affairs

Teacher observations and troops-to-teachers are two other avenues for assistance in transitioning to a career as a teacher. The teacher observation program arranges classroom observations for local college students who would like to (or need to) visit The Sullivans Elementary School and observe actual teachers and students as they interact on a daily basis.

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and the Sullivans consider it part of their mission to support partnerships with universities and provide quality experiences for pre-service teachers. troops to teachers is a program primarily aimed at assisting former service members make the transition to the classroom.

Many university degree programs require students to observe professional teachers at work as part of a teacher training program.

This is in addition to the time spent actually teaching under the guidance of a professional teacher commonly called student teaching.

These hours (in some programs as much as 100 hours) are called field experience hours. The Sullivans School helps local university students with these requirements by matching university students up with suitable teaching professionals and classrooms which reflect their interests.

Laverne Outen, Sullivans School vice principal has taken a particularly hands-on approach to the program by talking to the students about their goals according to Trent Anderson, University of Phoenix representative in Yokosuka.

"The field experience hours are primarily designed to give the students some practical applications they can use as a basis for classroom discussions," said Anderson. "At first, students are asked to be passive, sort of a fly on the wall observers, looking at classroom designs, instructional methods, behavior management, and lesson planning. Later in the program they are encouraged to take more of an active role under the guidance of the teacher. Ninety percent of their field experience hours are in a certified K-12 setting, the other 10 percent can be achieved in alternative educational settings like Phi Delta Kappa, scouts, or local youth organizations."

According to Anderson, students at University of Phoenix are asked to reflect on their observations after each experience in a field experience record, where they document in roughly 200 words what they took away from a particular visit. Students have several writing prompts to help guide these reflections; in turn, some visits are tied to specific course assignments.

Before students can start student teaching, they must log a minimum of 100 hours and document these hours on their field experience record.

Sabrina Bishop, a navy family member who is currently studying education at Rio Salado College and observing Social Studies in Jeff Sparling's third-grade classroom and Science in Steve Parker's fourth-grade classroom finds the observations very helpful. She says, "I am learning awesome classroom management skills and picking up lots of tricks of the trade."

No article about pathways to education would be complete without mention of the troops-to-teachers program. Troops-to-teachers is a federally funded program that aids service members as they transition to the classroom.

The program will assist any service member with an undergraduate degree in finding teacher certification programs, alternative certification programs, and employment. The program may even place prospective teachers into high needs schools where they can receive a stipend while they attend courses leading to their certification.

Requirements are different for all the states and each state has a separate troops-to-teachers office you will need to contact.

More information about degree programs at University of Phoenix can be found by contacting their local office at 042-530-4523.

More information about the school observation program can be obtained by calling Laverne Outen, vice principal of the Sullivans School, at 243-7336.

The Navy College is a great resource for information about the troops-to-teachers program. For more information about the Troops-to-Teachers program call 243-8131.

Sharing experience, knowledge

(Left) Santee Pecadeso, a Nile C. Kinnick High School Student assists The Sullivans Elementary School student Austin Hansen with a math assignment as part of his career practicum classroom experience at the Sullivans School. Photo by Steve Parker

Transition benifits: Separation counseling standardized online

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The Navy announced the fleet will convert to a standardized pre-separation checklist available online which will help ensure Sailors fully understand their eligibility and how to access transition services and benefits.

"Making the move from uniform to the civilian sector is an important transition which demands a Sailor's full attention in order to be successful," said Rear Adm. Martha Herb, director, personnel readiness and community support (N135). "These standardized checklists will ensure Sailors have a thorough understanding and access to the full range of benefits available to them, no matter where they are in the world."

NAVADMIN 300/11 guides Navy career counselors and separating Sailors to the web sites where they can download the new versions of pre-separation counseling checklist for active component service members (DD Form 2648) and pre-separation counseling checklist for reserve component service members released from active duty (DD Form 2648-1).

These forms became mandatory Oct. 1, and will guide the legally mandated pre-separation counseling session for transitioning Sailors who have been on active duty for more than 180 days. This counseling should occur no later than 90 days before a Sailor's projected separation or retirement date.

Transition counselors can access these forms and the "Transition Assistance Program (TAP) User Access Guide," at www.dmdc.osd.mil/tap. To gain access, counselors should contact their local Fleet and Family Support Center TAP staff.

If counselors cannot access the online tool, scannable forms will be available at http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/dd/ddforms2500-2999.htm.

Standardized online separation counseling is one of many transition benefits available to separating Sailors including those affected by the Enlisted Retention Board (ERB).

For the latest ERB information visit Navy Personnel Command's ERB website; www.public.navy.mil/bupers-nps/boards/ERB/Pages/default2/aspx.

CFAY VITA Tax Center

Tip of the Week

Serve in a Combat Zone or Qualified Hazardous Duty Area in 2011? If you served in a Combat Zone (CZ) or Qualified Hazardous Duty Area (QHDA) for only one day, that entire month's pay is tax-free! Make sure your W-2 reflects this. What are CZs and QHDAs? A Combat Zone is any area the President of the United States designates by Executive Order as an area in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat. A QHDA is declared by Congress, and is treated like a Combat Zone. If you have any questions or think you might qualify for this tax treatment, visit the CFAY Tax Center or the Naval Legal Service Office for more information.