



NEWS Texas Education Agency

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TEA provides support to regions expecting student enrollment surges due to base realignments

AUSTIN – Military base realignments and closures will bring thousands of new families to Texas and trigger an enrollment surge in school districts in the El Paso, San Antonio and Killeen areas.

El Paso's Fort Bliss alone expects to grow by 300 percent giving it 37,000 soldiers by 2012. With those soldiers come children. El Paso area schools estimate a 20,000 student increase.

To assist districts in preparing for this growth surge, Commissioner of Education Robert Scott today announced his intent to transfer up to \$300,000 to three Education Service Centers to fund additional field service agents. Field service agents are problem solvers who serve as liaisons between service centers and school districts.

"Texas schools are proud to serve military families. We want new residents to have a smooth transition into our public schools. But any time there is a movement this large, there are bound to be issues that come up. District officials are likely to have questions about student records, immunizations, testing requirements and much more. Field service agents can help them get quick answers from their service centers or from the Texas Education Agency," he said.

The state funds will be used to assist school districts impacted by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) in the following education service center areas: Region 12 (Waco); Region 19 (El Paso); and Region 20 (San Antonio).

"I commend the Texas Education Agency for increasing funds to these regions so that the school districts can better respond to the demands of educating the children of the country's military forces. By easing the transition to a new school, these children and their families will have one less worry as they become part of their new community," said state Sen. Troy Fraser, whose district includes Fort Hood in Killeen.

State Sen. Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio whose area includes several military bases, agreed, saying "As chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations, it has been a pleasure to collaborate with Commissioner Scott and our local school districts on this initiative. By adding resources to those areas where the enrollment of military children will drastically increase, we will be able to facilitate a smoother transition for our military families. Our military service members and their families have enough to worry about when fighting for our country and our freedom. We are indebted to them for their service, and this initiative will prove to our service members and their families this state's gratitude."

State Sen. Elliot Shapleigh of El Paso said, "BRAC will bring challenges to El Paso, San Antonio and Killeen. With support on building new schools, recruiting new teachers and providing counseling, the state can be a partner with communities that host new troops and military families."