

**Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan
Education Partnership Group Meeting
February 19, 2010**

Meeting attendees:

- Kate Hatten, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
- Kathlynn Jackson, Falcon School District 49
- Doug Jeavons, BBC Research & Consulting
- Cynthia Pesek, Academy School District 20
- Dave Roudebush, Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8
- Mary Thurman, Colorado Springs School District 11
- Mark Zamora, Harrison School District 2

Phase 2 Update

Doug Jeavons distributed the draft report and supplemental tables on K-12 education (attached). He noted that school-age children projections have been updated and refined based on the latest troop growth and deployment figures from Fort Carson and the most recent Impact Aid data from the school districts. The most significant growth at Fort Carson took place in 2009 (through the first quarter of federal FY 2010). Some growth is still anticipated, and fluctuations in enrollments are expected to continue because of deployments. It was noted that families with school-age children tend to remain in the area more than families with smaller children or spouses without children; however, the circumstances continue to be fluid as deployments continue.

In addition to the breakdown of children by age ranges and school district, the group also requested information by Soldier pay grades. This information is important because the number of children by pay grade varies and having more information about the makeup of units (and pay grades) will help the districts better project enrollments.

It was noted that when BRAC increases were first announced, school districts were expecting much greater numbers. While growth, particularly in some districts, has been significant, the increase was less than anticipated early in the process and in Phase 1 of the Growth Plan. Deployments and the economic downturn which has limited non-military growth are contributing factors.

Another key factor is the increased incidence of special needs children from Fort Carson (as families appear to be selecting the post in order to take advantage of services available in the region). It was also suggested that distance learning, a growing trend in K-12 education, be addressed in the report. The group also requested that pre-K data be included.

The group reviewed Phase 1 recommendations and addressed key findings based on the Phase 2 analysis. District representatives stressed the continuing need for timely, accurate data on troop movements and deployments to help the districts plan better for military student needs. The need for improved communication and access to school records was also noted; these issues are being

addressed through the Interstate Compact, but districts and Fort Carson should continue to work together to address these concerns locally.

Some districts continue to need funding for capital construction, and this issue is exacerbated by decreasing state funding. Second count day funding is also beneficial to the districts, although it is unlikely to be funded again this year. Districts also expressed concerns about the lag in Impact Aid funding.

The group also noted the disparity between costs to serve special needs children and the amount of funding the districts receive to provide services. It was suggested that the report include the average amount districts spend based on different categories of needs (including autism, English language learners, and other categories) to document this disparity.

Additionally, the creation of a state-wide liaison position to address military issues at a state and federal level would benefit the region.

Districts are seeing an increased need in behavioral health issues for military students. Some districts have been able to obtain grant or DODEA funding for additional counselors to assist military students.

It was suggested that the group continue to meet (although less frequently) to communicate key issues and provide updates on enrollments in order to continue calibrating the Fort Carson demographic model and to make sure that districts have the latest information on troop movements and deployments. It was also noted that the number of military families identified through surveys is generally higher than numbers reported via Impact Aid forms. Therefore, some districts are seeking ways to address this underreporting (and underfunding) issue.

Other Business

The draft report will be updated based on today's discussion and distributed to the group for review and comment. The CDMC will review findings and recommendations for each issue area at the March meeting. The draft Phase 2 report will be made available for public review in April.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

The next partnership group meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, 11 March at 3:30pm.

The CDMC will meet on Wednesday, 17 March at 3:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm.