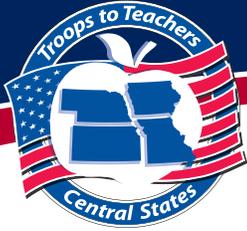


TROOPS TO TEACHERS



✦ JEFFERSON CITY OFFICE

877.530.2765

✦ ST. LOUIS OFFICE

314.729.2444

✦ KANSAS CITY OFFICE

816.241.1705

A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION: A NEW TEACHER SHARES HIS STORY

West Virginia Army National Guard Sergeant Michael S. McKenzie now teaches health.



Like many youth, Michael S. McKenzie faced challenges in his younger days, but his middle school health teacher and coach never gave up on him.

"I was a high school drop-out who was lost in drugs and alcohol," said McKenzie, a sergeant in the West Virginia Army National Guard.

He recently secured a position teaching Health with the West Virginia Mountaineer Challenge Academy in Kingwood, W.Va. with the help of the Troops to Teachers North Atlantic Region Office. Those early lessons have stayed with McKenzie and now enhance his effectiveness as a teacher at the academy.

The Mountaineer Challenge Academy is part of the National Youth Challenge Program which began in 1993, when the National Guard was directed to develop a plan to "add value to America" by providing values, skills, education and self-discipline to young people, incorporating the structure and esprit de corps found in the military model. The academy gives academically challenged 16 to 18 year olds a second chance at obtaining their basic education.

The program uses eight core components in a quasi-military environment during a 22-week residential and one-year post-residential follow-up program.

McKenzie credits the West Virginia Army National Guard with giving him the opportunity to go to college. He enlisted in 2008, deployed to Kuwait for a year in 2011, and was deployed in West Virginia's Randolph County during Hurricane Sandy, which he described as the

highlight of his military career.

"We worked 20-hour days to help our community after the hurricane," he said. "Most of the community was without power for two weeks, so it was very rewarding to give back during a time of need." McKenzie majored in Health and Physical Education at West Virginia University, completing his undergraduate degree in 2014. He is scheduled to start a master's program in Education Leadership this semester.

"Coach Carr is currently the principal at my old middle school," said McKenzie. "I guess you could say I am following in his footsteps as a health teacher, and eventually, as a principal. I chose health and physical education because I love to work out and love learning how the body works.

There is a huge child obesity epidemic today and I want kids to know what happens when you put something into your body (good and bad) so they can make educated decisions."

When asked what he liked most about working at the academy, McKenzie enthusiastically said, "I absolutely love it! We take approximately 150 adolescents, who probably were not going to earn their high school diploma, and work with them so they can accomplish that goal and become contributing members of society. McKenzie's story clearly shows that sometimes lessons learned from a rocky start in life can provide a valuable perspective in the classroom.

Take the first step toward helping the next generation of Americans succeed, register for the Troops to Teachers program today, www.proudtoserveagain.com.



TROOPS TO TEACHERS



TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GI BILL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS, CALL 888.442.4551

TROOPS TO TEACHERS

What is Troops to Teachers?

Troops to Teachers was established in 1994 to assist transitioning service members in beginning new careers as school teachers. The Department of Defense program provides counseling and referral services for participants to help them meet education and licensing requirements to teach, and subsequently helps them secure a teaching position. Since 1994, more than 18,000 veterans have successfully transitioned to a career in education. Additionally, more than 2,000 veterans are currently enrolled in teacher certification programs and will be seeking employment as teachers in the coming years.

What do veterans bring to the table?

When you hire a veteran, you bring unmatched skills, experiences and dedication to your schools and students. Traits leading to a successful military career - team leadership, initiative, discipline, integrity and the ability to thrive in an ever-changing environment - naturally transfer to success in the classroom. Veterans can provide your schools and students with the following advantages:

- Opportunity to learn from real-world experiences to enhance instruction and provide a valuable perspective as young people develop skills for life
- Exceptional classroom management to meet the overall needs of diverse learning environments and positively impact student achievement
- Effective interaction with parents, community members, and other teachers and staff
- Valuable resource for teachers and administrators in understanding the challenges facing military children

Troops to Teachers

Troops to Teacher can assist in your search for highly qualified teacher to fill your classrooms. Here are some of the advantages of working with Troops to Teachers:

- Providing a no-cost source of highly qualified teacher candidates and employment-ready certified teachers
- Assisting school officials in locating a veteran with exceptional teaching skills who can assist you in achieving your school's goals
- Filling critical shortages in math, science, special education, foreign languages, and career and technical education
- Providing committed and passionate veterans to help you achieve teacher retention goals - More than 70 percent of Troops to Teachers participants plan to remain in the teaching profession as long as possible or until retirement.
- Meeting the need for gender balance and racial diversity in teaching staff - Veterans who become teachers are 82 percent male and 43 percent minority.

STATE TEACHER JOB VACANCY SITES

Looking for a new job? These are some links that may prove useful for finding certified and substitute teaching jobs. For a more complete listing go to our website:

WWW.TROOPSTOTEACHERS.MO.GOV

MO: <http://www.moteachingjobs.com/>

IA: <http://www.iowaeducationjobs.com/>

NE: <http://www.nebraskaeducationjobs.com/>

KS: <http://www.kansasteachingjobs.com/>

MISSOURI/IOWA/NEBRASKA/KANSAS

Chad Schatz, Director

Ron Marsch, Supervisor

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Joanne Tubbs p: 515.281.3611

e-mail: Joanne.Tubbs@iowa.gov

NEBRASKA

Bethina Garrett p: 402.471.0739

e-mail: nde.tcweb@nebraska.gov

<http://www.education.ne.gov/tcert>

KANSAS

Susan Helbert p: 785.296.2288

e-mail: shelbert@ksde.org



TROOPS TO TEACHERS MENTORS

We are pleased to have a list of mentors on our web site. These people have successfully been through the process from start to finish. They are offering their thoughts, insights, and encouragement to others pursuing their goals of becoming teachers.

WANT TO BECOME A MENTOR?

The advice and guidance you will provide is invaluable to fellow veterans interested in starting careers as K-12 public school teachers.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO BE A MENTOR?

Visit: DESE.TroopsToTeachers@DESE.mo.gov or

click here to join us: <http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/TTT-MENTOR%20CONNECTION-%202006-14.pdf>

VETERAN'S EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTION

MISSOURI STATE APPROVING AGENCY



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE GI BIL

Over the past 70 years, nearly 24 million persons have benefitted from education benefit programs under the various GI Bills from World War II on. The original version of the GI Bill has been described as one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever enacted. In Fiscal Year 2014 there were 1,088,411 beneficiaries who received VA education benefits.

These beneficiaries were enrolled in 69,409 programs approved by the State Approving Agencies that had a fiscal impact of \$12.4 billion dollars. State Approving Agencies have been a major part of these programs since 1947.

Beneficiaries who received education benefits during fiscal year 2014

Program	Total Beneficiaries	Total Payments (\$Billions)
POST 9/11	790,408	\$10,754,649
MGIB-AD	77,389	\$511,652
MGIB-SR ⁸	63,745	\$419,804
VRAP	52,288	\$412,606
REAP	13,784	\$56,357
DEA	90,789	\$513,633
VEAP ⁹	8	\$424
TOTAL	1,088,411	\$12,399,125

Source: VBA Office of Resource Management. ⁸ Based on service in the Selected Reserve. ⁹ Total payment dollars include Section 901 program participants, although beneficiaries are not included.



To verify eligibility for GI Bill® Benefits visit: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/

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CERTIFYING OFFICIAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



OJT workshop for the Department of Corrections held on December 8, 2015 in Jefferson City.

The VA will be holding training sessions for certifying officials throughout the state. The sessions will be hosted by Education Liaison Representatives (ELR) Barry Walser and Christina Hanks. You will also have the opportunity to meet with someone from the Missouri State Approving Agency. These are very informative sessions and are beneficial to both the new and the experienced certifying official.

The next workshop is scheduled for Wednesday March 9 and Thursday March 10 at Southeast Missouri State University in the University Center Building. March 9th will be reserved for School certifying officials and will cover the new updates to the SCO Handbook. March 10th will be reserved for On-the-Job training and Apprenticeship certifying officials.

FUTURE TRAINING WORKSHOPS:

April 19-20, 2016 in Columbia, MO

Tentative date - May 18-19, 2016 in Hannibal, MO

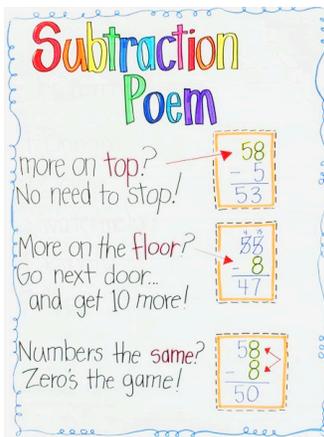
Tentative date - June 8-9, 2016 in Kansas City, MO

July 19-21, 2016 - Annual AVECO Conference in St. Louis, MO

Check out the post from 2/19 on the DANTES Troops to Teachers facebook page.

DANTES TROOPS TO TEACHERS NATIONAL OFFICE

Greetings TTT community! Each TTT participant has their own gift and passion for what they truly desire to teach and it is our job to help make their dream job of being a teacher come true. One of the myths about TTT is that if you don't want to teach math, science, special education or a foreign language you shouldn't register with TTT. That is extremely false as TTT participants teach a variety of subjects to include music, vocational/technical, physical education and more. Come explore TTT and we'll tell you some more!



A dedicated toll-free hotline is now available **FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS (SCOS) ONLY.**

Toll-free hotline number 1 (855) 225.1159

The hotline is available from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Central Time. SCOs must provide the school's facility code and be listed as a designated VA school certifying official to receive assistance through the dedicated hotline.

TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS, OR TO SEE HOW MUCH YOUR ENTITLEMENT IS, CALL 888.442.4551.

WHAT ARE VA GI BILL OJT/ APPRENTICESHIP AND MISSOURI SHOW ME HEROES PROGRAMS?

Missouri State Approving Agency and the Show-Me Heroes Program agree to share information regarding VA benefits for on-the-job training and apprenticeship and Show Me Heroes on-the-job training reimbursements to employers.

The VA program for on-the-job- training and apprenticeship include benefits for eligible veterans and dependents. The minimum training program length is at least six months. Benefits range from \$276 to \$1,341 or more per month paid to the veteran, based on entitlement.

The Show-Me Heroes Program features a 50% wage reimbursement to employers in qualifying training for up to six months. Some veterans may qualify for both programs based on each program approval criteria.

Contact the Missouri State Approving Agency at **1-877-530-2765** or **1-573-751-1250**.

The Show-Me Heroes program phone number is **1-800-592-6020** and the web site is: <http://showmeheroes.mo.gov/>



We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to:

Jefferson State Office Building, Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act) 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480p: 573.526.4757 or Relay Missouri p: 800.735.2966.

IOWA



ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE OF BEGINNING TEACHERS - Monday, February 22, 2016

A new website designed to expedite a new teacher's learning curve is seeking volunteers - both new and experienced - to participate in a pilot study. The Iowa Teacher Performance Assessment provides beginning teachers and mentors a structured process for looking at teacher practice that makes teachers active players in their own learning as part of their first two years of teaching.

What's in it for beginning teachers and school districts?

- The beginning teacher and mentor will have an enriched discussion centered on the Iowa Teaching Standards.
- The beginning teachers will receive targeted feedback to improve their practice.
- Evidence will be compiled to support the beginning teacher's mastery of the Iowa Teaching Standards.

The pilot aims to learn from the volunteers' experiences using the website to inform changes to the site.

For more information, visit the **Iowa Teacher Performance Assessment website**. For specific questions and information, send an email to: dversteeg@IA-TPA.com or marietta.rives@iowa.gov.

More information about educator preparation in Iowa can found at <http://educateiowa.gov/>

KANSAS



THREE KANSAS SCHOOLS NAMED STATE SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER

TOPEKA — Three Kansas schools have been designated as State Schools of Character by Character.org, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., dedicated to ensuring young people are ethical and engaged citizens. The recognition is given through the Kansas Schools of Character Recognition Program. Sponsoring organizations are the Topeka City of Character, Character.org, the Kansas State Department of Education and the Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Site.

The three Kansas schools are Lincoln Elementary School, Clay County Unified School District 379; Kiowa County Elementary and Junior High School, Kiowa County USD 422; and Valley Center Intermediate School, Valley Center USD 262. Character.org named 66 schools and four districts from 16 states as State Schools of Character for 2016. Character.org and its state affiliates each year select schools and districts that demonstrate a dedicated focus on character development that has a true positive impact on academic achievement, student behavior and school climate.

Schools that are designated as a State School of Character will be considered for national recognition as a National School of Character. "This is more than just recognition for a school's hard work," said Sue Kidd, coordinator of the Kansas Character Development Initiative. "It ties so closely to the Kansans Can initiative." The Kansas State Board of Education in October announced its new Kansans Can vision for education in Kansas — Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

"On our statewide listening tour, Kansans told us that character and 'soft skills' were important skills to have as adults," said Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education. "That is why the State Board made those skills front and center of their new vision for education. Congratulations to Kiowa County, Lincoln and Valley Center for their commitment to developing character in students and on achieving this outstanding award!" The three Kansas State Schools of Character will be honored May 6 at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka. It will be announced at the ceremony whether any of the three Kansas schools were selected as a 2016 National School of Character.

For more information on the Kansas Character Development Initiative, visit www.topekacharacter.org.

For more information about Character.org, visit www.character.org.

More information about educator preparation in Kansas can found at www.ksde.org



NEBRASKA

THERESE WILLKOMM TO SPEAK AT THE NETA CONFERENCE



ATP/Education is sponsoring Therese Willkomm as a featured speaker at the Nebraska Education Technology Association (NETA) Conference April 21-22, 2016 at the Century Link Center in Omaha.

Therese Willkomm, Ph.D, is the Director of New Hampshire's State Assistive Technology Program with the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and is an associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy.

Dr. Willkomm is known nationally and internationally as "The MacGyver" of Assistive Technology and has designed and fabricated thousands of

solutions for individuals with disabilities including her patented A.T. Pad Stand, a multi-use assistive technology mounting device. She is also known throughout the country for her trainings on iPad apps and adaptations. Dr. Willkomm has published two books: "Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes" and "Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes - Book 2 - Ordinary Items, Extraordinary Solutions".

Dr. Willkomm will be presenting three sessions on April 21st:

- 1] Fabrication Tools and Materials for Making Solutions in Minutes (Part 1)
- 2] Fabrication Tools and Materials for Making Solutions in Minutes (Part 2)
- 3] There's an App for That! Mobile Applications to Increase Independence.

More information about educator preparation in Nebraska can found at www.education.ne.gov/tcert

MISSOURI

SCIENCE TEACHER FROM ST. JOSEPH WINS PRESTIGIOUS MILKEN AWARD 02/11/2016



Deborah Siebern-Dennis, a 7th and 8th grade honors science teacher at Bode Middle School in St. Joseph, has been named the winner of a Milken Educator Award that includes an unrestricted cash prize of \$25,000. St. Joseph School District officials called a surprise assembly for the announcement today. Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley of the Milken Educator Awards made the presentation. Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven was on hand for the celebration and helped surprise Deborah.

"We are delighted that Deborah has received this recognition from the Milken Educator Awards," said Commissioner Vandeven. "Deborah is a great example of the how the teaching profession enriches opportunities for Missouri students by promoting a love for learning."

Deborah has been at Bode Middle School since 2006. She began her teaching career in Las Vegas, Nevada, after receiving her Bachelor of Arts in middle school education from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She also holds a master's degree in educational science and educational leadership from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville.

The Milken Educator Awards are given each year to outstanding K-12 teachers, principals and specialists who are furthering excellence in education. Missouri has been participating in the Milken Awards since 1996. Since then, a total of 46 Missouri educators have been honored with the Milken prize. Recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators fostering effective educational leadership.

Preparing, developing and supporting effective educators is a primary goal of Missouri's Top 10 by 20 initiative, which calls for Missouri to rank among the top 10 states in educational performance by 2020.

For more information, contact:
Sarah Potter
Communications Coordinator
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Phone
573-751-3469

communications@dese.mo.gov



More information about educator preparation in Missouri can found at dese.mo.gov/eq/ep/.