

## **PROFILE OF LAUSD POLICIES**

### **Background Issues and Concerns**

In February of 2003, a few members of the Human Rights Committee, UTLA went before the Board of Education to express specific concerns about the Opt Out policies (especially the short time line and lack of information passed on to students and parents) and the JROTC military programs at 29 of the LAUSD high schools at that time. We wanted the District to provide the facts regarding the budget for JROTC in light of the cut backs on many other programs, plus a no tolerance for guns mandate. This led to a newly formed ***District Committee*** with the task of exploring the issues of

militarism in LAUSD chaired by **Bud Jacobs**, head of Secondary Schools. Other participants included **Mark Shrager**, Budget Director, **Lieutenant Colonel Ted McDonald**, US Army Director of Army Instruction and JROTC Coordinator, **Esther Wong**, Directory Information, **Jean Akashi**, Human Relations Staff and **Andy Griggs** and **Arlene Inouye**, UTLA Human Rights Committee Co-Chairs.

Since that time, we have been seen the pervasive and insidious ways that militarism is promoted in this school district at all levels from preschool to high school, from students to adult staff. Even in an elementary school, Ex General Tommy Franks had an easy entry into the schools as a “motivational speaker” sponsored by U.S. Trust without parent notification or permission.

Upon investigating how this happened, we learned that it was approved from the Communications and Publicity Department of

LAUSD, and that there are no specific guidelines or list of approved groups. If a principal wants this type of speaker, it appears there are no district guidelines or parameters as to the appropriateness of such a person. After consulting with our legal advisors, we expressed our strong concerns in letters to each of the board members, informing them of the issues involved.

The ***District Committee*** meetings over the five years has gone through many changes, with most of the district personnel no longer participating in the committee. The representatives of UTLA for the past few years have been **Gregory Sotir** and **Arlene Inouye**. We have requested factual data and process information as we critically examined how military recruiters have been able to gain access to middle school and high school students. We have collected and documented information from the high schools, and organized to make changes. A significant change in 2007 was the blanket Option 8 district policy for all schools administering the ASVAB (see the ASVAB information on our JROTC link).

### **Opt Out Policy for LAUSD**

Opt Out (No Child Left Behind, ESEA Amendment 9528) is a federal law signed by President Bush in 2002 that impacts the issue of military recruiters in our public schools (and private schools if they receive federal funds). The LAUSD policy for the 2007 school year was as follows:

-Letters in English and Spanish were mailed home to all juniors and seniors in July for juniors and seniors on Track B, all others were mailed home the forms in September. The deadline for all students was October 27<sup>th</sup>, to be returned at the local school (check at your school for the specific place).

- The 2007-8 Parent Student Handbook also has the Opt Out form, in English and Spanish.
- Information is additionally provided to parents on the LAUSD website [www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net) , where the forms can be downloaded in seven languages- English, Russian, Chinese, Armenian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean.

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The Opt Out form allows students to choose to give their contact information to college recruiters, while withholding it from military recruiters.

Each school determines which office collects the forms, and inputs the data into the SIS computer system (see Reference Guide REF-1833.0 Secondary Student Directory Information, for specific information regarding this process). This data must be entered into the SIS computer system at the local school by the deadline. Military recruiters who are requesting the Student Directory Information must go to the Centralized Directory Information Office, not the local school. We continue to hear that military recruiters have requested Directory Information from administrators or counselors at schools, when the policy clearly dictates the process. School staff should NEVER give out the personal contact information of students to the military.

### **2005 Changes to the Opt Out Policy**

- The time to return the forms was extended from 2 weeks to 2 months.
- The actual dates were changed to better accommodate Track B, on the Year Round Concept 6 calendar so that the Track B students would receive the information while in school (July 11<sup>th</sup>).
- The web site information was changed to be more accessible to parents (on the parent link, versus the reference bulletin link). The language was also simplified and easier to understand.
- Principals were given information regarding the Opt Out law and process by the head of Secondary Schools at the Principal meetings.

### **2005 Changes Requested but NOT made to the Opt Out Policy**

- Students are not able to Opt Out WITHOUT parent signatures. Apparently even though the NCLB law does not specifically state that parent signatures are required (and even reads to imply that students can Opt Out), school district lawyers interpret the law to mean otherwise. The National Lawyer's Guild in Los Angeles has followed up in pursuing this with the district. Other school districts such as Santa Cruz, have allowed students to Opt Out without parent signatures.
- We were originally told that the school district would explore and try to find a way to put the Opt out information on the Emergency Card. At the districts request, we provided samples of other school district forms. However, right before the due date we were told there wasn't enough room on the Emergency Card to include the information. --- -Additionally, Opt Out must be

done the Junior and Senior year, and even if you signed a form one year, it doesn't apply to the next.

### **CAMS Operation Opt Out Campaign**

CAMS had an **Operation Opt Out** campaign last year to assist the school district in their mandate to inform students and parents about this law. Through a grassroots effort of students, teachers, school staff, and community there were over **5,000 MORE** Opt Out forms in 2004 over the previous year. That is, out of 63,000 juniors and seniors, 18% chose to Opt Out in 2004 over 13% in 2003. In the subsequent years, the numbers continued to rise to 26.1% in 2007, or 20,317 juniors and seniors This

Student Privacy effort encouraged student participation and mobilized students to address militarism in their schools throughout the school year.

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In 2004, the public discovered that the Pentagon has been secretly collecting personal data of 30 million young people ages 16-25 years of age that includes ethnicity, grade point average, social security numbers and more. In fact, additional privacy information has been added each year, and now totals over 700 categories of information. A written request must be sent to the **JAMRS** (Joint Advertising and Marketing Research & Studies Office) in order to be added to the "suppression files" of the Pentagon's database. See [www.nnomy.org](http://www.nnomy.org) for more information. Many are skeptical that even if requested, the Pentagon may disregard privacy requests.

### **Military Recruiting on Campuses**

**Section 9528** of the NCLB also states "Each local educational agency (or school) receiving assistance under this Act shall provide military recruiters the same access to secondary students as is provided generally to post secondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students."

Direct military recruitment on our 50 high school campuses varies greatly. This NCLB law states that military recruiters cannot be banned from LAUSD, and must have the same access as other college and job recruiters. The situation in LAUSD is that many schools have MORE military recruiter access than other recruiters. The community agency Inner City Struggle, attempted to measure the disparity in ELA schools in 2003 with the following comparison: Roosevelt HS students were 5 times more likely to have a military recruiter approach them than a college recruiter. This gives us an indication of the wide disparity that our students in working poor communities experience. (However, because of the Adopt a School organizing at Roosevelt HS, the school now has a school policy restricting military recruiters with active promotion of career and college alternatives.) Military recruiters will admit frequenting the schools and communities where are most likely to meet their quotas. For example, it is documented that military recruiters were on the campus of San Marino High School one time in the entire school year. In communities with poor youth of color, military recruiters have frequented the campus from

several times a week to everyday. In addition, district officials are NOT aware of the military recruitment abuses occurring on many of our campuses. This includes:

- harassing phone calls and home visits
- flirting and harassment of female students even to the extent of a student and her parents obtaining a restraining order on a Marine Recruiter
- illegally driving students home, and then not letting students out of the car until they sign their name on a paper to be recruited
- military recruiters intimidating students and giving out false information with life threatening consequences
- cornering students during lunch or after school.
- bringing onto school campuses- humvees, military hardware, pull up bars, and navy ships on school grounds for recruitment purposes
- military marketing that floods the schools with bribes such as free pens, frisbees, water bottles,caps, etc.

The District Staff has stated that military recruitment on school campuses should be a LOCAL SCHOOL decision not dictated by district wide mandates. However they WERE NOT AWARE of the frequency and extent of the abuses which we have documented. For example, at a meeting we asked the district staff how was it that military recruiters could pick up and drive students home. They were not aware of this practice and stated that district policy requires parent permission slips for all transportation from school grounds. Army recruiters invited to one of our meetings assured the

District staff that they would not tolerate abuses by military recruiters. If abuses occur we were told to the head of Secondary Schools and local school Principals regarding violations as clarified in the District Policy Bulletin 2067.1.

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- Military hardware such as vans, humvees, trucks, etc must get clearance from the Office of Risk Management. (We have requested information regarding how this will be implemented and who is accountable).
- District staff would review military recruiter parameters with Principals at their monthly meetings.
- CAMS would be able to present our Great Jobs, Careers, Futures! Booklet to the LAUSD counselors, and in the future make copies available. This is a resource available for Career Fairs and in the Career Office, to make visible the alternatives.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> circuit court known as the “Equal Access Law” makes it permissible to counter militarism since the question of military service (whether voluntary or compulsory) is a controversial political (not economic or academic) issue. Furthermore, if a school establishes a forum for one side to present its views on the issue, it must give opponents equal access to the

forum. See attachment of all the ways Equal Access has been applied including tabling and handing out flyers at school events including Career Fairs or Career Awareness events. Equal Access Law is an effective way to shift the focus from militarism to the realities of serving in the military today. It also opens up a forum for alternatives to the military. See the attached summary and examples of counter recruitment activities as a result of these court cases. (Deleted repetitive sentence about the Great Jobs, Careers Future)

## **ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL APTITUDE BATTERY ASVAB**

In 2005 the ASVAB was highlighted in our campaign to demilitarize schools. It is an aspect of military recruiting that has received minimal attention, even though it is an important recruiting tool. Generals on CSPAN recently stated that their greatest asset to recruiting was the ASVAB. This speaks to its importance and influence. In 2007, we successfully achieved a blanket Option 8 policy so that all schools giving this voluntary test, did NOT release scores or contact information to military recruiters. (See JROTC page on web site for more information). General information about the ASVAB or Armed Services Vocational Battery is from the American Friends Service Committee [www.youth4peace.org](http://www.youth4peace.org).

### **What is ASVAB?**

The ASVAB is the admissions and placement test for the US military. All persons enlisting in the US military are required to take ASVAB. It determines whether a potential recruit is qualified for the military and for certain military jobs. Military recruiters also claim that it will help a person choose a civilian career, but that is not what it was designed for.

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ASVAB is a three-hour test that consists of 10 sections: Word Knowledge; Paragraph Comprehension; Arithmetic Reasoning; Mathematics Knowledge; General Science; Auto and Shop Information; Mechanical Comprehension; Electronics Information; Numerical Operations; and Coding Speed. The ASVAB is supposed to look for talent and natural skills in subject areas that are considered important for different military jobs.

Scores from selected individual sections of the test are combined according to a certain formula to come up with a measure known as AFQT - Armed Forces Qualifying Test. Congress has established minimum AFQT scores for admission to the military. Standards vary according to whether a person has a high school diploma, a GED, or has not graduated from high school. ASVAB is part of a larger program, the Department of Defense Testing Program (commonly known as the "Career Exploration Program"), through which students can take surveys about

their interests, identify personal characteristics, and use ASVAB scores to match their backgrounds to possible careers.

### **How do recruiters use the ASVAB?**

The military uses ASVAB to do targeted recruitment of young people. Recruiters give special attention to students in the 11th or 12th grade who meet minimum standards - what they refer to as "prequalified leads." They use test information (scores, name, address, etc.) to identify and reach young people they hope to sign up. Recruiters contact these young people by letters, phone calls, and visits to home and school. Students may receive calls from recruiters even if they say they are not interested in joining the military. One often-used tactic is to leave a message for a student telling him/her of an appointment with a recruiter, even if the student didn't ask for one. Just remember, there is no law that requires a student to join the military or to talk to recruiters. The ASVAB is not the only way recruiters get personal information about students. Typically recruiters obtain contact information (such as name, address, phone number, courses taken and extracurricular activities) from the school administration or district office, but the ASVAB gives them much more personal information about potential recruits.

### **Are schools required to give the ASVAB test?**

No. One of the main reasons schools give ASVAB is that it is offered by the Pentagon at no charge to the school.

ASVAB is a voluntary test given to 900,000 students at 13,000 high schools or post secondary schools nationwide (or 2/3 of the schools). In LAUSD it is a local school decision.

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### **Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC)**

The Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps not to be confused with the ROTC program on college campuses can be complicated and difficult to get straightforward answers from the district. It is a Military-run training program for high school students. The goal is to create favorable attitudes and impressions towards the Services and careers in the Armed Forces (**332 Code of Fed Regulations 42.5:3c**). Between 1992 to 1997, JROTC programs more than doubled. After General Colin Powell visited South Central L.A. following the riots in 1992, he concluded inner city youth needed more discipline and structure. JROTC continues to grow with over 3,500 programs nationwide, 48 new programs in 2005. The Navy JROTC states that more than 40% cadets who complete JROTC eventually join the military, although the actual figure is unknown and probably varies by geographical and other reasons.

Each branch of the military has their own JROTC program and contract with the district. The attachments show the policy establishing JROTC in the schools and the specific Army contract

with LAUSD. After repeated requests, we were able to get a budget for the JROTC program, although it does not include the specific dollar amount that LAUSD pays to maintain this program touted as leadership and character development. In 2005

Bud Jacobs, head of secondary education and the chair of our committee, has stated that the school district supports JROTC. Therefore it was not possible to engage in an objective analysis of what JROTC actually teaches, the involuntary placement of students into JROTC because of a lack of physical education alternatives, and the use of guns when the district has a no tolerance for guns policy among other concerns. The LAUSD budget for JROTC was approximately 6 million dollars for 30

high schools in the district (see the budget chart). Bear in mind that the Dept of Defense reimbursement covers half of the salary of the military officer and the textbooks. It does not provide for health/medical benefits, worker's compensation, cost of the class room, and all other expenses etc.

Lt. Colonel Ted Mac Donald states that JROTC has nothing to do with military recruiting and is about teaching leadership and citizenship. He also say that they accept everybody, however the military has a "don't ask don't tell" policy which is discriminatory to those who are not heterosexual.

JROTC is difficult to challenge because in addition to the districts resistance, they have mobilized parents who are supportive of the program and will defend it. In addition, the JROTC instructors in LAUSD are part of the UTLA bargaining unit. However, issues of concern include:

- JROTC teachers not being fully credentialed as the NCLB Act requires
- Failure to meet the California Education Code standards as a physical education elective
- Involuntary placement of students into JROTC because of scheduling conflicts or a lack of PE classes
- High numbers of special education and English Language Learners enrolled into JROTC, often without their understanding of what JROTC is about.

CAMS will continue to address JROTC using multiple strategies.