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*Educators from the Carlisle Area School District pose for a group photo during the Excellence in Education Reception April 30 at Quarters One. The Army War College community took time to honor top educators from the regions five school districts and Saint Patrick's School for their work with military kids.*

*Find more photos at [www.facebook.com/usawc](http://www.facebook.com/usawc)*

April 30, 2014 – Select top educators of the region’s five school districts and Saint Patrick’s School were honored by Army War College leadership and parents during a ceremony at Quarters One April 30.

**Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo**, U.S. Army War College Commandant, hosted the Excellence in Education Reception in his home, to thank local educators for all they do for military children. The exceptional principals, teachers, and counselors who educate military children were identified for honors by the superintendents of Carlisle, Big Spring, Cumberland Valley, Mechanicsburg and South Middleton school districts and Saint Patrick’s School.

The value of the relationship between the schools and Carlisle Barracks is apparent for **Lt. Col. Sean Gavin**, Class of ’14, who was Carlisle High School student himself when his father was an Army War College student.

“What I really noticed is that there isn’t a stigma anymore with being a ‘postie,’ instead of someone who have lived here their whole life,” he said. “The schools here really embrace our kids and help them with any potential struggles. Constantly uprooting our kids is tough but great schools like Carlisle make

it so much easier for them.”

One of the honorees, **Jeffery Bell**, principal of Bellaire Elementary School, was honored to be selected for recognition.

“As educators it’s our duty to ensure the best possible experience for all of our students,” he said. “I really accept this honor on behalf of all of my teachers and staff who put in the hard work day in and day out to ensure our kids get the most out of their time here.”

**John Friend**, Carlisle Area School District Superintendent, said he was thankful that the War College Community took time to honor local educators, including 10 from his district, which has the largest number of War College children in their schools.

“It’s incredible that the leadership here continues to make it a point to honor local educators,” he said. “We understand the unique challenges that these students face and we are prepared to do everything in our power to ensure the best experience for the students. The close relationship we have with Carlisle Barracks is vital, without that, this would not work.”

He pointed out that the relationship is truly beneficial for all parties.

“I truly believe it’s valuable for our students as well to be in class with both American and the international students that come through the Army War College,” he said. “They are able to share their unique experiences living all over the country and the world that really makes for a richer experience for all of our students.”

Cucolo spoke at the event not only as a senior commander, but as a parent of three “military brats” who spent their lives going from school to school.

“We parents, we invested and demanding parents, who pass through your magnificent communities, we have great expectations of our teachers,” he said. “And as the representative of our tiny but high impact Carlisle Barracks and U.S. Army War College community, I’m here to tell you that all of you present and honored tonight far exceed our expectations.”

The Army War College sponsored the fifth annual reception to highlight the unique relationship between schools and the military children who live a challenging life of many moves and many school transitions.

Cucolo explained that the quality of life both inside and outside the gates for servicemembers and their Families is vital to the all-volunteer force. Employees of the Carlisle Barracks Child, Youth, and School Services were also recognized for close collaboration with parents and schools in providing

educational summer and after-school programs.

“Inside the gates I control this, but outside the gates I do not, that takes community commitment,” he said. “A key part of this quality of life outside the gates I speak of is the knowledge that our Families will be embraced by understanding and empathic folks who recognize the very special and different nature of our wonderful ‘brats.’ You recognize that each is a unique individual - and the fact this takes additional attention, energy and even administrative coordination is not lost on any of use or taken for granted.

“So tonight we thank you as well for allowing us to do our duty. You should go home tonight knowing that your selfless and exceptional performance of your duties is in fact keeping the nation strong.”

These school districts have made a special, additional commitment by becoming members of the Military Child Education Coalition several years ago. On a daily basis, administrators, teachers, coaches and counselors have shown commitment to military children and other children whose parents live a transient life through thoughtful policies and a relentless focus on children’s success and well-being.

List of honorees:

**Carlisle Area School District**

Mr. Bruce Rowland, Teacher

Mrs. Sue Biondo-Hench, Teacher

Mr. Eric Sands, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Kristen Furness, Teacher

Mr. Michael Gogoj, Assistant Principal

Mr. Mark Smeltz, Teacher

Mrs. Diane Reisinger, Teacher

Mr. Jeffrey R. Bell, Principal

Ms. Danielle M. Bailor, Teacher

Ms. Kathi Smith, Teacher

**Cumberland Valley School District**

Mr. Joseph Shirvinski, Principal

Sgt. Richard Vargas, CV JROTC

Col. John Kardos, CV JROTC

Mrs. Lisa Fones, School Counselor

Mrs. Laura Jones, Teacher

**South Middleton School District**

Mrs. Sharon Giselman, Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Tara Trostle, Librarian

Mrs. Jennifer Chamberlin, Teacher

Ms. Amy Necci, Teacher

**Big Spring School District**

Mr. Steve Smith, Principal

Mr. Scott Anderson, Teacher

Mr. William August, Principal

Mr. Scott Penner, Teacher

**Mechanicsburg School District**

Mr. Nicholas Butt, Counselor

Ms. Cheryl Dellinger, Teacher

Mrs. Brenda Schmidt, Counselor

Mr. Daniel Williams, Teacher

**Saint Patrick School**

Mrs. Jill Brown, Teacher

**Tieman Child Development Center – Leaderkenny Army Depot**

Ms. Ronda Cover

Ms. Martha Farner

**Moore Child Development Center – Carlisle Barracks**

Ms. Marlene Quinn

Mrs. Susan Keller

**Youth Services – Carlisle Barracks**

Mrs. Amy Magnuson

Ms. Meriah Swope

