

April 11, 2006

Issue: Camden County Schools -- Capacity for Growth

Public Education facilities and programs in Camden County were planned and funded to accommodate a strong military presence. In 1999, federally connected students made up 53% of the 9,631 students in Camden County Schools. Currently, they make up less than 42% of the 9,502 students enrolled. Schools in Camden County were planned to accommodate military families and supporting industries for 10 Trident submarines. Costs associated with educational infrastructure to support this presence were borne, in large part, by Camden residents. Capital projects and debt borne by the citizens to support education during the initial military expansion totaled **\$30,651,298**.

As reported during BRAC, school leaders effectively managed the challenges associated with rapid growth during establishment of Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay. Enrollment in Camden Schools increased from 2,840 in 1978 to 9,666 in 2002 (240%). The Board of Education capitalized on the opportunities expansion offered to enrich the lives of both military and civilian families through a robust, comprehensive educational system. Questions concerning the school system's ability to adapt, change and flourish during a time of expansion can quickly be answered by examining past accomplishments, extraordinary community support and testimony of Navy personnel.

Additional missions will not present an unprecedented or significant burden to our school system.

- Student performance, opportunities for advanced learning, instructional staff credentials, and overwhelming support by the community attest to the school system's commitment to educational excellence.
- The school system is fortunate to have effective collegial relationships with both the military and with private developers to assess expansion and growth.
- Extraordinary community support for Camden's students is a mainstay of continued success in the classroom, in extra curricular pursuits and in post secondary endeavors.
- School leaders embraced the initial expansion of Kings Bay and possess the experience, insight, acumen, and community support to do so again.

Action: Work to acquire new missions for Kings Bay to fill the void left by departing subs to use fully the abundance of quality educational resources provided for students and families in Camden County.

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