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DoDEA Application Webinar

**Operator**

Hello everyone, and thank you for joining. At this time, all lines have been muted. If you have a question during today's program, please use the Q&A box in the lower right hand corner of the screen to submit your question. This call is being recorded.

It is now my pleasure to turn the call over to Jennifer. Please go ahead.

**Jennifer**

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the webinar to help guide you as you write your application for the DoDEA's Military Connected Local Educational Agency for Academic and Support programs grant opportunity. Today's webinar will be recorded as she just mentioned for your reference as you write your proposals. We have muted the phones so that if you have called in on your phone, please mute your computer speakers. If you have any questions, again, please type them in the Q&A box on the right of your screen and we will address them at the end of the webinar. This webinar recording and a list of your questions and answers will be posted on the ETAC website by the end of the week. If you have any technical difficulties, please press 00 on your phone for assistance.

Well, our presentation today -- as she stated, my name is Jennifer Daily Perkins, and I am the Grant Program Manager here at DoDEA and with me I have Vanessa Hartnett, who is our grant program analyst. Our facilitators for today's webinar will be Kate (Tindle, Evaluation Specialist) and Bridget Humphries, Evaluation Specialist from our Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center. I'll now turn our program over to Bridget and Kate, and they will walk you through the presentation agenda and the rest of the program.

**Kate Tindle**

Thank you Jennifer. This is Kate Tindle. Welcome everyone to the webinar. So, today's agenda will follow as on the screen now. we'll give you some background information on the DoDEA Grants Program. We'll tell you a bit about who we are, ETAC, and then we'll get to the information that will guide your thinking and writing process.

As this slide indicates, DoDEA covers a wide geographical area and serves a variety of educational needs. In addition to operating 172 schools, DoDEA provides support to majority of military families whose children attend public and private schools across the United States. DoDEA's vision of a school district is to be among the world's leaders in education enriching the lives of military-

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dependent students and the community in which they live. With over 80% of the school-age children of military families attending schools outside of the gate, DoDEA shares its resources to support expansion of educational opportunities for those children from military families through a competitive grant program.

So, you can see here in this round of grants, DoDEA expects to provide an estimated 30 million for educational projects. There will be technical assistance meeting in the fall of 2016 to meet DoDEA and ETAC staff -- to meet with DoDEA and ETAC staff and (unintelligible) project evaluation, data collection, and implementation and reporting plans. And as you see the awards will be made sometime in late July.

So, who is eligible? This slide gives you the eligibility requirements for applying to the DoDEA (MCAS) Program. The district doesn't have any particular threshold to meet with all participating schools must have at least 15% of the population be military-dependent students. The competitive priorities are first time applicants. If you've never ever, ever, every had a DoDEA grant before, charter schools, and then high percentage of military-dependent students enrollment if you have a higher than the 15.

So, you can find your military-dependent student enrollment data in your current 2015-2016 Impact Aid Card. New applicants have that competitive priority; however, if you already have a grant you can still apply. You may include schools that are covered under the existing grant as long as they have the required 15% enrollment of military-dependent students. And the new competitive priority you can also receive extra priority points if you're a charter school or participating with 75% or higher military enrollment. So, that's the last one that high percentage means 75%. That's what DoDEA considers high percentage.

So ETAC -- ETAC is the evaluation, technical assistance center, and we want everyone's grant proposal to address DoDEA's intent and meet your system's need. ETAC supports grantees data collection efforts once they receive the DoDEA funding.

We know what kinds of data DoDEA needs to collect for its needs, so this webinar can help right at the beginning think about data collection and analysis as you plan your grant proposal.

The purpose of these grant funds are indicated on this slide by working to improve the education of military-dependent students, DoDEA expects to impact military students and families in positive and lasting ways. ‘

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So, we have grant purposes and grant strategies. The purpose of the grant funding is for either academic and or emotional social support for military students. So, this slide gives some detail about those two types of project purposes that are allowable. You see if your project has a support focus. The support goal and activities that you put in place must impact students directly. Parents and families are certainly involved but the outcome must have a student focus to it. Also, all projects are expected to begin to think about sustainability from the beginning, so that's why we have that in red at the bottom of the slide.

You also notice for both of the academic and the support the first point is that you just embed sustained professional development. And this is to strengthen the teacher or counselor -- whichever staff member's involved in the project to strengthen their content knowledge and their skills,

So, for the 2016 RFPs, these are the noteworthy points we want you to pay attention to. All projects use the first year to plan their projects, so you have a planning year written in. All strategies must be direct services to students. DoDEA has provided a list of direct services on page 11 of the RFP that are allowable in this application to support the academic or support goals.

As always with DoDEA grants, regardless of your project's focus, you must provide professional development for your staff that supports the goals students. You just heard me say that on the last slide, and you'll hear me say that several times throughout this webinar because DoDEA recognizes the key role teachers play in student success and wants to ensure that those teachers also get ample support to implement the project's initiative. You will embed ongoing professional development as part of your implementation plan, and we'll talk more about this when we come to setting up your goals and strategies in a few minutes.

For this application, you will be completing an evaluation matrix that is on page 15 of the RFP and this will detail your evaluation plan. You won't have to write a narrative, no paragraphs, just fill out that evaluation matrix.

So, the matrix is an organizational tool for you. We will host a post award meeting in the fall to review and revise this matrix to support your planning year. You will see there are required fidelity and process questions within the matrix right now as part of the RFP. All projects must answer those questions. In addition to those questions, you will create your own fidelity and process questions in that matrix, so you will add questions to it. That makes sense for your particular project.

The final point on the slide indicates a mentoring opportunity. If you are a new applicant meaning you have never received the DoDEA grant before, you will be

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assigned a mentor. This will be a seasoned DoDEA grantee to support your efforts. If you are a seasoned DoDEA grantee, who has completed a full grant cycle successfully and you're interested in providing support to a new grantee, then you can indicate a willingness to be a mentor in your section for a narrative. And you can adjust your budget to include opportunities to meet with your mentees, a travel budget that you might need, '

New applicants and possible mentors should refer to page 5 of the RFP for a note on how to adjust your budget to allow for this opportunity. If DoDEA selects you as a mentor or mentee you will be expected to stay an additional day at the fall meeting. So, again, that budget information is on page 5 of the RFP.

In the Appendix C area of the RFP, there is information about common challenges. We have provided you with information about why you need at least a halftime project director, 50% time. We included the items to consider during your planning year and why an outside evaluator is important, especially as you write your application. So, if it's at all possible, if you can have an outside evaluator included in your writing team that's ideal.

While we provide a good deal of information about goals and outcomes in the body of the RFP, there's a bit more in the Appendix C that includes more detailed information about establishing baseline measures that will help you and your evaluator consider the goals and outcomes carefully.

We also include information about why DoDEA considers process evaluation a necessary component to measure your progress and some pitfalls in developing your own survey instrument instead of using one that's already out there published.

We also have frequently asked questions, FAQs, at the end of this presentation that give you short answers to commonly asked questions. So, just submitting your application through Grants.Gov, information about LEAs and charter schools, so be sure to read over the FAQs here and appendix C before you begin writing so that you're fully aware of the common challenges and questions.

So, in thinking about your writing, we want you to start at the end. So, the number one consideration is the student who will benefit from the project. Whether your project is to improve students academically or to improve their emotional, social wellbeing or both, you must figure out first how you will capture that improvement in measurable ways. Measuring outcomes is not as straightforward when your project is about supporting students' emotional and social wellbeing. But there are ways to capture pre and post measures that make sense. With all of the testing required now, capturing academic pre and post measures is a bit more obvious.

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The second consideration in your project thinking is about how you will go about improving the student outcomes that you have chosen. Grantees just plan to integrate ongoing professional development opportunities for the staff involved. So, there. I said it again.

You can also include other strategies such as the use of new technology, creating dynamic (unintelligible) within the school community. Your proposal should provide good detail about how the direct service strategies will be implemented, how they will be maintained, how they align to the student outcomes, and how the work will be sustained after DoDEA funding has ended.

A reasonable plan -- that's the third consideration. And that's the one that you must give a lot of thought to as you plan your project. You will need to report data to ETAC semesterly fall and spring and summer, three times and provide an annual report every year of the grant period. That is a lot of data to report.

You may also have internal reporting requirements from your school system. Be very clear and concise when designing your student outcomes because whatever you design you will eventually have to report on and that can get overly burdensome very quickly. This is not the time to impress us with quantity. Be reasonable and realistic about what your student outcomes will be and what strategies you will put in place to support the student outcomes to make this project manageable for your project staff and meaningful to students and staff involved.

So, now we begin the phase of the webinar that we're talking directly about the narrative, what expect you will be writing. So, the overview materials you see from this slide will not be scored. It's the cover page. That includes the participating school details, your abstract, your table of content. These things are very important to the reviewers to orient them to your work but it's not scored. But, you do have to include it your application. The overview materials are also not part of the 30 pages.

So, there are five parts of the project narrative that will be scored and that you need to address. You can see the points assigned to each section and can consider these as a way the sections will be evaluated relative to each other. So, something that is 15 points, something that's 5 versus something that's 30. There you go. You could think about it that way. We're gong to use the rubric in this webinar. We're going to walk through it the same rubric that the reviewers use to score your proposal. So, there's no surprises. Exactly what you're seeing here today is what the reviewers are going to use to score each of these five sections. When you are putting your application together, all the sections listed on this slide 1 through 6 should be consolidated into one document. Do

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not uploaded to Grants.Gov piecemeal. One through six here on this slide should all be one document.

Section 2, the needs assessment -- remember section 1 you see at the bottom with those asterisks is the cover (aids abstract) table of contents. While these are not scored, they are required to provide an overview of your project, so they're very helpful to orient the reader to your overall vision.

The needs assessment is the first scored section, and this is what holds your proposal together. It is from this needs data that you will build your case for setting project goals and for picking the strategies that will meet the needs you discussed in this section. So, all of the other sections in your narrative must align to the data you present here. So, you see here you need to provide data to describe your need and that is worth four points. And this again is what the reviewers are going to look for. So, when you're describing your data, the reviewers are going to look for how you present your student achievement data if you're working on an academic goal or your social emotional needs data for your student if you're working on a support goal.

They're to look for you to present needs related to the program area, so program area being academic or support. And you're going to present data related to your target population, so in our case that would be your military-dependent students. So, it's not enough to provide mass achievement data for your schools or for your district. You'll need to break that out and talk about how your military connected students do on math -- that kind of thing.

We also highly recommend multiple data comparisons. You did aggregate your military as I just described. You used multiple data sources and types so not just a state test. You might have some benchmarking tests that you use. You might have climate surveys. If you have a behavior system in your school you might have referral data, all that sort of thing that you can include that supports your need.

You also will need to discuss past efforts. What have you done in the past about improving student's English, reading, math? What have you done to support their transitional needs when they come from -- the military students when they come from different school systems? And, what lessons have you learned from those past efforts that will inform and influence your current project that you're writing about?

And then there's a separate section for needs for professional development. So, again, we're asking you to write about what math instruction professional development, what reading, what social-emotional support professional development? Whatever your project is about, you're going to have to provide

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your staff with professional development to support them as they work through the project.

So project goals -- that's what section 3 is about. This slide is a reminder of what goals and outcomes are and how they should be aligned to the needs assessment data. Goals relate to the overall purpose of the project and lead to the outcome. They should be achievable through the strategies that you consider putting in place, and you will need to report each year on whether you have met your stated outcome. You should figure out what the final outcome will be in 2021 and then figure out expected interim outcomes for 2018, '19, '20 that lead up to '21, so again, it's that idea of starting at the end.

You cannot have more than three project goals. And it would be beneficial to focus each project goal on only one academic area, all science or all math or all English to streamline your project. Do not write one goal to improve science and math. These should be broken apart. The same holds for having a goal that crosses elementary and secondary. Again, each of these should be separate goals because there's often separate strategies or assessments even if the overall goal is to improve math. The way that you go about improving math in elementary school and measuring it is often very different than how you go about improving math in a middle school or a high school and how you measure it in those levels.

So, you would probably need to report in these separately internally as well so if you set it up from the beginning this way, it makes it easier on you. There's less changes. You have up to four direct service strategies that you can choose from for each goal, page 11 of the RFP. Remember to think about what ongoing professional development will be needed to support the teachers who will be implementing these direct services and include this in your narrative. DoDEA has learned from past grantees that the professional development is the key not only to implementation but to sustainability. You must include this as part of your project design.

Remember also for this application your goal choices and strategies are limited with plenty of examples in the RFP on how to write them. You have a little more flexibility in writing the outcome. That's why you can get up to three points for them. But, again, we have provided several examples to consider as you create your own. So, use those in your writing.

Another consideration is your first year as a planning year. So, consider what you can organize and manage in the first year, a particular kind of baseline data collection or beginning the professional development so teachers are ready for the implementation in your year two. We'll talk about the budget section, but your budget should be set up to spend about 20% across each year with the

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planning year perhaps having less than 20% but it also could have more if you end up putting -- front loading your professional development.

Your goals and activities, again, must be aligned to your budget spread across the five years.

Measuring outcomes -- measuring for military student outcomes is a key requirement to keep in mind. Many school systems do not currently disaggregate for military students, so if yours does not or you're unsure if you do, you need to figure out how you will do this and include this in your proposal. Use the project goal section to help write this part of the narrative. The examples have been provided for a reason. And you can see those examples on pages 10 and 11. Use them as a template.

So, section 4, the project plan and leadership role, you see the 9 points here for how you go about presenting criteria for your project director. The overall project plan is worth 30 points in this section, so it's an important piece of your overall proposal. The RFP includes criteria for 2 leadership roles, the project director as you see here and the outside evaluator, which we'll get to in a few slides. So, please review these criteria carefully. There are also expectations laid out for the role of the project director during the planning year and during the implementation and overseeing professional development activities specifically. Given these responsibilities that is why DoDEA requires having at least a 50% time project director. So you see here the planning role and the implementation role for the project director.

And this RFP lays out expectations for the project director. In past grants, we have had superintendents or principals designated as the project director. But you see from this list of expected responsibility that having a district or school leadership responsibility is really not viable if you're also running a successful project. The superintendent or principals don't have enough time.

There are many project activities that will potentially require the project director to be involved data gathering and analysis, supervising direct services or actually providing professional development, troubleshooting during implementation, working with the outside evaluator. So, we understand that some of the activities that we've listed here may fall under district or school decision making in your system like hiring personnel, but hopefully you can consider the project director as part of that process and they would be instrumental in helping the district or school make those decisions.

Please note there's a separate category about developing and monitoring ongoing professional development. You see that there? It's worth three points.

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So, you can see DoDEA and ETAC are serious about professional development. It really is the key to making these projects successful.

Another part of the project plan is talking about your -- writing about your outside evaluator. So, an outside evaluator is just that., outside. This is not someone from the district's research and assessment department. Your evaluator should be familiar with education context and how projects involving direct services to students get implemented. It will be even better if your evaluator knows your particular district because the context surrounding your school or military-dependent student is unique. The more the evaluator knows about your school, your families, your students, the better job they can do interpreting data in meaningful ways. DoDEA requires that projects collect process data throughout the year and report on these metrics as a way to note the implementation progress. So, you need to also be sure your evaluator is comfortable with this type of data, process data and not only the summative student test data that is typical in education grants.

Section 5 -- project evaluation -- fain this is a 30 point section, and we've been talking about measures and evaluations already in this webinar, But, now we finally get to this actual section the project evaluation section. This is important to consider in order to make your project reasonable and not overly burdensome to your project staff with data collection. There are three ways that you will continually review your project and report out on how your project is progressing in these areas. Remember, there are semesterly reports due to DoDEA in the fall, in the spring, and in the summer.

Usually your student outcomes are known to you over the summer after your testing results come back from the state. However, each semester you will report your project's progress towards meeting that ultimate student outcome. The assumption is that you have chosen a goal based on need and then you chose strategies and actions to put in place that are aligned and will allow your student to meet the goal. This means that first you should be checking on the fidelity of your program's implementation to be sure that your project is going as you planned it to.

Secondly, you will need to establish a data collection routine for each of your strategies and the professional development that supports the strategies to be sure that they are doing what you intended them to do to improve an academic area or help students improve their social, emotional wellbeing, again, as a way to ensure that you are continually moving toward that final student outcome.

And then finally comes number three when you can report about the actual student outcomes. So, you see here is the evaluation design matrix. Again, for this section, no narrative required. You are just going to fill in this matrix and it's

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the only narrative if you will for the evaluation section. This is something to work on with your outside evaluator if you have that person in place. So, if you take the time to work on the evaluation, your work during the project will be streamlined and naturally geared to collecting necessary data. DoDEA require an outside evaluator for your project.

Your evaluation should provide evaluation questions to guide your process and summative data collection in addition to the ones that are required and already pre-populated in the matrix. Data collection instruments should be valid and reliable whenever possible, and grantees must disaggregate for military students.

There is a benchmark indicator in the indicator column in the matrix. This is where you include how you will know that the strategy is being implemented successfully. If you look at the RFP in Appendix D, we have provided an example of a filled out matrix, so please be sure to look at that and use it as a template.

There is a row for fidelity of strategy implementation and this is where you ask the questions about your strategy. Are they being implemented according to the way you meant them to be implemented? There's a row for process monitoring of ongoing implementation. And this is where you ask questions about how the strategies are working how is the target population reacting to the strategy? How well are the teachers translating what they learned from professional development into their classroom activities? Are enough students and families being reached by their plan?

The third row in red is no longer about the strategy. Instead, this is where the summative questions belong about whether the intended student outcome was achieved. This template implies that the strategies are aligned to the outcome. So, if your strategies were implemented as plan, the target audience for your strategy responded well to those strategies, then you will achieve your intended student outcome. If the fidelity or process data indicate that the process strategy have not been fully implemented or not well received, this format can lead you to recommendations for improving the program in the moment. So, you have a better chance of meeting your outcomes at the end of the school year. So, once this is in place, it actually becomes a working document for you to use during your project implementation.

Section 6, budget narrative and sustainability -- in the final section of your proposal be sure you include as much detail as possible. There is a 424A form at Grants.Gov that you need to use as your budget form. The budget is another area that you will report on regularly. We understand that the budget is an estimate but we ask that you make those estimates as close to reality as possible. The edging for each year of the grant will be August 31<sup>st</sup> of 2017, '18,

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'19, '20, and '21 -- August 31<sup>st</sup>. Minimum of 20% of funds should be allocated in each year. However, the year 1 budget may be lower because it will be a planning year or higher if you front load your professional development. At least 2 to 5 percent of the total funds must be allocated to your third part evaluator. See the online instructions for details about the budget section. '

So, in conclusion, we hope that you now feel a little more comfortable in moving forward with your project to support military-connected students. Your completed applicator, as you see here in bold, is due Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and should be uploaded through Grants.Gov.

Again, the second point, sections 1 through 6 should be combined into one document: your overview materials, your 30-page, narrative and your appendices. Once your application is received, it will be assigned to a panel of three reviewers. All reviewers are experts from the education and/or counseling fields. Your application will be assigned to reviewers with relevant backgrounds to your project goals, so for instance, Stem projects will have reviewers with Stem background. Support projects will have counselor background.

Here are the important links you may need. We will post the recorded webinar in a PDF of the PowerPoint on the ETAC website. We will also post answers to your questions at the ETAC website so check back for updates. We will send a tweet) indicating when these materials are posted online, so follow us on Twitter if you don't already for updates.

So, in our frequently asked questions section, we have a definition for the military dependent student there for you. Note that it can be #2, a dependent of a civilian employee of the Department of Defense or 3, the dependent of a person who is not a member of armed forces or civilian employee but who is employed on federal property, so, again, check your impact aid card.

Question 3, yes you can apply if you already have a DoDEA grant as long as the schools involved meet the 15% criteria. Charter schools may apply as long as they have the 15% military-dependent students. You cannot apply as a group. LEAs must be individual. We do have the mentoring that we will do afterwards, but you cannot come in as a group. And you o use your impact aid from this year, 2015 to '16.

There is the link for our particular RFP. If you need assistance with Grants.Gov, that's their number, and unfortunately you cannot email us a draft of your proposal for feedback. Today is the only technical assistance that will be offered.

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So, we're going to take now to answer your questions. If you have questions, please ask them by typing into the Q&A box on the right hand side of you screen, and we'll read them aloud and answer them so everyone can hear.

So, Bridget do we have any questions?

Bridget: We do, and if it's alright, I think I'll run through them and go through some of the answers. We've been trying to address people's questions as we go but I think some of these answers will be helpful for everyone.

First we had a question about what we consider a high percentage of military-dependent students in regards to the competitive preference priorities. And the answer to that is if you refer to page 3 of your RFP, applicants who include at least one participating school with 75% or more of military dependent students may receive two additional points on their applications. So, that actually answers two questions that we've had come in. Seventy-five percent or more military-dependent student enrollment and the criteria there is that one of your participating schools must have that high threshold. If you have other participating schools that have the 15% or higher so some are between 15% and 75% you would still be eligible for the competitive preference points there.

Next we had a question about the 15% required military-connected threshold per school and the answer again I would refer you to page 2 of your RFP. It says that all participating schools must have 15% or greater military-dependent student enrollment. So, the question was can that number be aggregated. Can you have some schools of 5% and some schools with 40% and that kind of averages out to a little more than 15. But, the answers no. Each school that participates in your project must have at least 15% military-dependent enrollment. And you are not required to include every school in your district. You can apply with just a handful of schools that have at least 50% military enrollment.

Continuing along that same line, we had a question about current grantees. If you are a current grantee and you have schools that are currently participating in DoDEA grant project, those schools can be included in this new competition. They just have to continue to meet that 15% threshold. But, it is possible to apply again as a current grantee.

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We had an additional question about the 25% FTE possibility for your budget. And we referred you to page 5 of the RFP under personnel. It says up to 25% of the total federal funds may be allocated to FTE position.

We had another question about the length of award. All of these projects will be five-year projects. All of them will be required to have the first year as a planning year.

Now, I'm just going to take one more minute cause we've had a flurry of questions come in right at the end here. So, I'm just going to scroll through these quickly and see what we can answer. Jennifer if you'd like to answer any, as they're coming up, as I'm scanning through these, please feel free.

Jennifer: Sure Bridget. There's a question here is there a limit on the percentage of the award that can be spent on the outside evaluator. If I can refer that question to page 5 of the RFP, We require that at least 3% but no more than 5% of grant funds be spent on the outside evaluator. And the outside evaluator, again, must not be a current employee of the LEA.

Bridget: We had an additional question about the budgeting for mentors and mentees. The only place in the RFP where that's addressed is on page 5 under grant meeting. It says LEAs must add a \$4500 line item to their year-one budget to cover the cost for the two-day grant meeting. The project director, third party evaluator and a staff member integral to the data they work with the project are required to attend this meeting, which is expected to occur in October 2016. Grantees may budget additional funds up to \$2500 to attend regional and/or mentor-mentee meetings throughout the grant cycle. So, that is where you find information about how to budget for the mentor-mentee opportunity.

We had a few more questions come in about the competitive preference priorities. And the only competitive preference priorities are listed on page 2. We have a question you know is Stem considered our property this year. You have the opportunity to decide whether you want to include academic or support goals or both. But the only competitive priorities that we have this year are for new applicants, charter schools, and

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those districts with one or more schools with high percentage of military-dependent student enrollment.

Kate: So, it looks like maybe the questions are slowing down.

Bridget: Yes, we will take a few moments -- excuse me, I'm still reading through them. We'll take a few moments to answer some of these questions individually to see if their specifically to your grant. Otherwise, we will be taking all of these questions and consolidating them as well as the answers into a Q&A document. We will be posting this information, as you can see on your screen,. when you go to the ETAC website and then click on resources and then grant applicant materials for this year.

By the end of this week, we will be posting the recording of this webinar, the slides from this webinar as well as the Q&A document with all of the questions that were asked during this webinar. You can also follow us please on Twitter at DoDEA Grant. We will be granting as these updates are made on the website. So, thank you very much.

Kate: Jennifer, did you want to say any parting words?

Jennifer: No, I just thank everyone for joining us today. We look forward to reviewing your grant applications as Bridget mentioned. We will have the questions and responses up by the end of the week from this webinar and the actual recorded webinar will also be on the website. So, we here in DoDEA look forward to reading your applications and than you in advance for all of the work that you do for our military-connected students.

Kate: Thank you everyone. Have a good afternoon.

**End of Audio**