

## **Meet the Pax River School Liaison: Ms. Dawn Simpson**

### **Where do you work?**

The School Liaison (SL) position is part of Navy Child and Youth Programs (CYP). There is a SL at every major installation for every branch of service around the world. SLs, an integral part of the CYP, are often found at installation Youth Centers or child care centers. My office at Pax River is located at the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) where I have the opportunity to coordinate and partner with many of the family focused programs (relocation, deployment, EFMP, etc).

**How long have you been the School Liaison for Pax River?** - I have had the honor and privilege to support Pax River and those who serve our country for 15 years. I am grateful for their service and sacrifice so anything I can do to make their lives a little easier is truly my pleasure.

### **What are your qualifications/experience?**

I have a degree in Psychology and have spent nearly 30 years in the education arena. Prior to my current Pax position, I was Assistant Director of Admissions at York College of Pennsylvania, then the Director of Admissions and Director of International Student programs at St. Mary's Ryken High School. My work in admissions provided me with an in-depth knowledge of school enrollment procedures, transcript reviews and credit transfers, plus first-hand experience working with students and parents during school enrollment and transitions. I have served as the advisor to Student Ambassador programs at both the high school and college level which prepared me to support youth sponsorship teams for the Navy. I was raised in St. Mary's County, attended St. Mary's County Public Schools and worked in local schools so I have a long-standing connection and well established relationship with the education community surrounding Pax River.

### **What do you do?**

I serve as the link between the Command, schools, and military connected-families. As part of CYP, I support the entire workforce – which includes all active-duty military as well as DoD civilians. I provide programs and services to both St. Mary's and Calvert county residents and schools. There is a School Liaison at Indian Head who supports Charles County so all of Southern Maryland is covered! We provide information and resources pertaining to K-12 education – everything from getting ready for Kindergarten to going to college and so much more! I provide presentations at commands and offer classes plus individual appointments to help parents/students prepare for transitions and deployments. I also educate educators, administrators and elected officials regarding the challenges our military families face and arm them with strategies and resources to support military-connected students in their schools.

People who contact me can learn about school options, enrollment procedures/requirements, various educational and extracurricular opportunities in our area (like the Youth Center/Teen Center on Base), plus resources and programs for homeschooling, special education and post-secondary preparation – I offer a College 101 Series and keep a running list of scholarships for military-connected students! I also coordinate school-based youth sponsorship (peer to peer) programs like Student2Student (S2S) and Anchored4Life (A4L) to assist youth during transitions and deployments (or extended parental separations). There are so many resources as well as state and national legislation to help level the playing field for our mobile military connected students.

My goal at Naval Air Station Patuxent River is to make sure all stakeholders are informed and work together to ensure students have smooth take-offs and soft landings as they transition from school to school, state to state and country to country! As families prepare to depart our area, I can connect them with the SL at their new duty station.

Families, faculty, and staff are welcome to contact me at [NASPax\\_SL@us.navy.mil](mailto:NASPax_SL@us.navy.mil) or 202-330-3093.