

Clark J. Godshall, Ed.D.
District Superintendent



ORLEANS/NIAGARA
Board of Cooperative Educational Services

The mission of the Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services is to be the premier provider of innovative and effective solutions for the evolving needs of our component districts and other learning collaboratives.



June 16, 2005

Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

On behalf of the Orleans/Niagara BOCES Board of Education and the 43,000 pupils served in this Supervisory District (Niagara and Orleans Counties), I wish to express our concern regarding the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard base. The recommendation to close this vital community/security site is not in the nation's best interest. The Board of Education and I urge the BRAC Commission to conduct additional investigations. We believe that further analysis will show the value to the economy, strategic geographic location, and superior work performance of the military staff associated with this base and would lead to the conclusion to retain this installation.

It is difficult to understand why the Air Force has decided to take planes, missions and jobs away from so many Air Guard and Air Reserve bases and put them on the most costly active duty bases and then claim cost savings as the determining factor. In addition, current lead media reports indicate that the United States is facing significant challenges in recruiting during war time. As the only remaining major military installation in Western New York, Niagara Falls has been a leading site for military recruitment.

The impact of this decision will be devastating to the New York Air National Guard and will make the Pentagon's efforts to recruit and retain military personnel even more difficult than it is now.

We and our constituencies stand with the Niagara Falls/Western New York community and are united in its support for this base and its retention. Please review the communities' impact of the Pentagon's recommendation to close this site.

Sincerely,

Clark J. Godshall, Ed.D.
District Superintendent

CJG/cph

Board of Education
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