

District 8 documentary aims to help kids of deployed military

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One by one, the students in Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8 express the heartache of having a deployed military parent.

“This may be the last time I see my parent. They are just gone,” says one teen.

Another says, “My father is a changed man. There is no spark. I hear him cry.”

The students appear on “Speak Out!” a new documentary that was created by District 8 and shown Thursday at a conference attended by 50 area educators, counselors and others who work with kids from military families.

The documentary, made under auspices of Boulder-based Colorado Operation Military Kids, will be shown statewide to schools and community organizations that help military children deal with trauma and loss, said Debbie Pierre, D-8’s assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

“Children are naturally courageous and resilient, but we still need to help them develop strengths to face challenges of being part of a military family, whether it’s coping when a father is hospitalized at Walter Reed Hospital, or facing the loss of a parent who doesn’t come home,” said Dee Steel of Washington, D.C., the conference leader.

The “Living in the New Normal” conference is one of many being conducted in districts nationwide by the nonprofit Military Child Education Coalition to provide strategies to help the more than 700,000 children in the U.S. who have a least one parent deployed.

For more information about the program, go to militarychild.org.