

# 2nd NCO Town Hall Unveils Changes to Professional Development

By Clifford Kyle Jones - NCO Journal

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Command Sgt. Maj. David S. Davenport Sr., command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, visits the 168th Regiment Regional Training Institute, a multi-component RTI of Excellence at Fort Carson, Colorado, responsible for training future leaders, earlier this year. Davenport visited with RTI leaders to discuss the future of professional military education, NCO professional development, and credentialing opportunities necessary for the Army to develop adaptive, agile and creative leaders — the same themes of the second State of NCO Development Town Hall last month.

Training and Doctrine Command's second State of NCO Development Town Hall kicked off June 23 with a tighter focus and a new format.

This one emphasized leader development, which TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport calls "Line of Effort 1" of the NCO 2020 Strategy.

Hundreds of Soldiers logged into the online chat and chimed in on Twitter and Facebook. Topics included NCO Professional Military Education, changes to Structured Self-Development, plans for a common core of instruction in required NCO courses, the new Master Leader Course, an emphasis on communication skills at all levels of NCO education, functional

courses such as the Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course and the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course, and the potential benefits to Soldiers under the Army University system.

Davenport said the first State of NCO Development Town Hall, which was conducted in March, was a “huge success” but “too wide in focus.” Limiting the discussion allowed more time to drill into the topics, but several of the commenters and even the moderator noted that the time seemed to speed by.

The second town hall featured speakers from TRADOC in Fort Eustis, Virginia; the Combined Arms Center and Army University at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

During the Webcast, Davenport announced that the next town hall, focused on talent management — Line of Effort 2 — will take place Nov. 3 and will follow the same format — three segments, with one in which Davenport has a chance to hit the chat board and interact directly with Soldiers.

Davenport noted that much progress had already been made on the NCO 2020 Strategy, even since — and partially because of — the last town hall. He said the Army had:

- Developed a digital job book to track, manage and certify Soldiers’ core competencies
- Established a standard for deferment from PME
- Set scheduling priorities for all NCOs attending PME
- Extended battalion and brigade sergeant major tour lengths to 30 months
- Removed Command Selection List categories and adopted all-in policies for both selection and assignments for sergeants major
- Defined broadening opportunities for the NCO Corps
- Developed a comprehensive strategy establishing the One Army School System
- Started work on revision of SSDs, improving the rigor and relevance of the courses and linking them to PME
- Started working on establishing a common core throughout all six levels of PME
- Developed a digital rucksack in support of the work being done with NCO professional development.

But most importantly, Davenport said, in just the past several months, the Army had reduced the backlog of NCOs needing to complete their next level of PME from more than 14,000 to about 8,000.

“I think that Line of Effort 1, as you can see, has a lot of momentum,” he said in closing the second town hall. “And, really, the hard work begins integrating everything that we’ve talked about tonight [on Aug. 3 and 4] when we have all the centers of excellence sergeants major,

the school sergeants major, here, and they basically get an in-depth look at common core. They get some homework to do to come back, as we begin integrating all these ideas, all these concepts into PME to make it a reality.

“A lot of work is to be done, but there’s a lot of momentum moving in that direction, so I don’t think it’s a question of if it’s going to happen but when — when do we have everything in place not to penalize a Soldier, but ... to make better sergeants and better staff sergeants? That is the end-state of everything that we’re doing for NCO 2020.”