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### Jackson to stagger schools' openings

Aim: Save cash on bus service

By **FRADY REISS**  
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

JACKSON — We live in a "9-to-5 world," township resident Catherine Idank declared.

So the mother of two is angry about the school district's recent announcement that, as of September, the How-

# Agency to probe fort closure

**BRAC PROCESS:** Government Accountability Office will review

**N.J. LAWMAKERS:** They pressed GAO to investigate decision

By **KEITH BROWN**  
and **BILL BOWMAN**  
COASTAL MONMOUTH BUREAU

The Government Accountability Office is committed to investigating the 2005 process that closed Fort Monmouth, but the size and scope of the probe have not yet been determined, a GAO official said Monday.

In their weekly meeting, GAO officials considered a request for the probe from Reps. Rush D. Holt and Frank J. Pallone Jr., both D-N.J., who last week called for an investigation into the Federal Base Realignment and Closure process that shuttered the 90-year-old Army post, according to Henry Hinton,

the GAO's managing director for defense capabilities and management.

"We're going to do something, we just don't know the scope of the work yet," Hinton said.

The GAO's move comes in the wake of a two-part Asbury Park Press investigation that revealed the cost of closing the fort had

nearly doubled — from \$780 million to \$1.5 billion — in the two years since the nine-member BRAC commission voted to close the post.

The Press investigation also revealed that key information casting doubt on the need to close defense research laboratories — such as the fort — was

missing from a report used by then-Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to justify the largest base consolidation in U.S. history.

Overall, the 2005 BRAC round is costing \$8.4 billion more than the BRAC commission approved, the investigation found.

"They're clearly interested, and they're clearly going to do an investigation," Pallone said of the GAO's move. "But obviously we'd like it to involve all the things that the

See **Fort**, Page **A4**



"We clearly suffered because wrong information was presented to the BRAC commission. ... Folks didn't have all the data they needed to make the decision to close Fort Monmouth."

— Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck, R-Monmouth

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