

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Susan M. Ahart Selected as DoDEA Nominee
to the 2008 National Distinguished Principals Program**

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA – Mrs. Susan M. Ahart, Principal of Jackson Elementary School at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, has been selected as the Department of Defense Education Activity’s (DoDEA’s) nominee to the 2008 National Distinguished Principals (NDP) Program.

In addition to being selected as the DoDEA nominee to the 2008 National Distinguished Principals Program, Ahart was named as the 2008 DoDEA Principal of the Year for Elementary and Middle Schools.

The National Distinguished Principals Program was established in 1984 as an annual event to honor exemplary elementary and middle school principals who set the pace, character, and quality of the education children receive during their early school years. The program is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), in corporate partnership with the American International Group Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company (AIG VALIC).

One principal is chosen annually from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Principals representing private K-8 schools, Department of Defense Dependents’ Schools, and the U.S. Department of State Overseas Schools are also recognized. Public school principals are nominated by peers in their home states, and the final selection for each state’s NDP is made by the NAESP state affiliate. Honorees from private schools and overseas schools are selected by special committees.

Ahart has worked for DoDEA schools for more than 26 years, initially as a classroom teacher, then as an assistant principal, and in her current position as a principal. She also served as a Student Teacher Supervisor at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. from 1987 to 1994. She received her Bachelor of Science and Masters in Education Degrees from Western Kentucky University (Bowling Green).

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Ahart's educational philosophy is grounded on high student achievement, her school's environment, and her staff.

"I encourage my teachers to provide a caring learning environment that is rich in resources and strong in adult support in order to help students be successful," she said. A school culture that support learning is directly measurable by high scores on standardized assessments. Teachers and staff have ownership and are clear about their job and what needs to be done. My teachers know their students. They know and value who they are as people and what their strengths and weaknesses are. Their job is to encourage growth," she added.

In announcing the selection of Susan Ahart, Dr. Joe Tafoya, Director of DoDEA, said, "One of qualities that is most evident about Susan is the passion and commitment she feels for our mission. She is results oriented and brings a consistent and strong focus on teaching and learning every day. That's what makes a difference for our students and that's what makes her stand out among her peers. We're very fortunate to have Susan on our team," said Tafoya.

Dr. Frank Calvano, Superintendent of DoDEA's Kentucky District lauded Ahart for her ability to enable her teachers to use research, make data-driven instructional decisions, and use the most effective instructional strategies to ensure student success. "Her teachers know their students, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the proven methodologies to promote their achievement," said Calvano.

Ahart will be honored at the NDP's awards ceremonies this fall in Washington, DC. In addition to her recent awards, Ahart has been involved in a variety of professional organizations, to include Phi Delta Kappa, The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), NAESP, and the American Cancer Society.

Editors: For more information about the NAESP and the NDP Program, visit www.naesp.org