

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gonzalez Named 2008 DoDEA Principal of the Year
for Middle and High School**

ARLINGTON, VA – The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) proudly announces that Dr. Julio Gonzalez, Principal of Faith Middle School, Fort Benning, GA., has been named the 2008 DoDEA Principal of the Year for Middle and High School. Dr. Gonzalez will now be a contender for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Middle School Principal of the Year.

The Principal of the Year program, sponsored by NASSP and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife), began in 1993 and honors secondary school principals who have succeeded in providing a quality education experience for their students and programs to enrich their students’ learning experience.

To qualify principals must demonstrate leadership, an ability to facilitate student achievement, and demonstrate their efforts to develop and maintain an environment that promotes student learning.



Once a State Principal of the Year is chosen from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), six finalists are then chosen to compete for the National Principal of the Year. Finalists are flown to Washington D.C. to attend an annual recognition banquet. Two of the six finalists are selected by a panel of judges as National Principals of the Year. The National Principals of the Year and four finalists attend the annual NASSP Convention in San Diego, CA. from February 27 to March 1, 2009. Both trips are funded by NASSP and MetLife.

Gonzalez has worked for DoDEA for more than twenty-five years in a variety of administrative and teaching assignments across the globe. Known as “Dr. G,” at Fort Benning, Gonzalez began his teacher career in Fairfax County, VA., as a U.S. and Virginia History and Government teacher. After receiving his Master of Arts degree in Education, he was hired by the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) in 1982 as a Social Studies and ESL teacher at George Dewey High School, Subic Bay, Philippines.

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Gonzalez Principal of the Year/2-2-2

Gonzalez went on to serve in other DoDEA schools in Okinawa, Japan; Zaragoza Unit School in Spain; Lajes Junior/Senior High School in the Azores; Portugal; and Balboa High School in Panama. He has also held several administrative positions in DoDEA's Domestic Dependents Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) system, including Principal and Assistant Principal at Scott Middle School and Acting Principal of Macdonald Intermediate School at Fort Knox, KY., and in his present capacity as the Principal of Faith Middle School.

During the past four years at Faith Middle School, Gonzalez has led several initiatives, including one to monitor students' academic progress, by implementing a data collection form based on Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores, report card grades and TerraNova standardized scores. He has also established programs such as a one-to-one laptop technology program for all 8th graders and facilitated a mobile laptop program for 6th and 7th graders.

Gonzalez also continued and enhanced the tradition of 'High School Night' at Faith Middle School. During 'High School Night' middle school students and their parents can meet with representatives from high schools in the neighboring counties to learn about the options available for their children after middle school.

In announcing the selection, DoDEA Director, Dr. Joe Tafoya said, "Julio Gonzalez is an outstanding professional in our field. He understands the DoDEA mission and works collaboratively with teachers and the entire military community to prepare all students for success and to provide military families with quality education programs. We are proud to have him represent us in this distinguished program," said Tafoya.

In her recommendation letter for Gonzalez, Juanita Patrick, an eighth-grade language arts teacher at Faith Middle School said: "He has impressed upon all stakeholders the importance of working together as a team in meeting the needs of all students. He met, and is still meeting, this challenge in a demanding transient military community in a time of heightened national security readiness."

A native of Puerto Rico, Gonzalez received his bachelor's degree in General Social Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico. He then went on to get his Masters Degree in Education from Trinity College and received his Doctorate of Philosophy in education from the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines. He also completed an Educational Leadership Graduate Program at Western Kentucky University.

Gonzalez is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Middle School Association (NMSA), the National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the Fort Benning Futures Committee, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

He is married to Daisy Mariela and they have two daughters, Julie and Jessica. Julie is a senior at Columbus State University. Jessica and husband, Eddie Birkla, are stationed at Lajes Air Field Base, Portugal. Julio, the proud grandfather of Alexander and Gabriella, cherishes special times with his family and is delighted that his grandson Alex will have the opportunity to attend the same school in which he taught while in Portugal. Julio loves to travel and play tennis, golf and soccer. He is a former member of Puerto Rico's Olympic and National Soccer teams.

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Gonzalez Principal of the Year/3-3-3

DoDEA plans, directs, coordinates, and manages the education programs for Department of Defense (DoD) dependents who would otherwise not have access to a high-quality public education. DoDEA consists of the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) located overseas, and the Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) located in the United States and its territories and possessions. DoDEA provides education to eligible DoD military and civilian dependents from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.