



## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin School Year 2009-2010**

**ARLINGTON, VA** – More than 80,000 students will begin the 2009-2010 School Year in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools around the world.

DoDEA plans, directs, coordinates, and manages pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education programs for Department of Defense (DoD) dependents that would otherwise not have access to a high-quality public education. DoDEA schools are located in Europe, the Pacific, the United States, Cuba, and Puerto Rico and Guam. DoDEA also provides support and resources to Local Education Activities (LEAs) throughout the United States that serve children of military families.

The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) provides support and funding for the education of eligible sponsors assigned at locations where DoD does not operate a school within commuting distance. For more information about the NDSP, visit [www.dodea.edu/schools/nonDoD](http://www.dodea.edu/schools/nonDoD).

All DoDEA schools are fully accredited by the North Central Association (NCA).

### **School Statistics**

DoDEA operates 191 schools configured into 14 districts located in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. DoDEA operates and maintains more than 1,400 facilities around the globe.

Construction will be complete for four new schools or additions in these locations for the 2009-2010 School Year:

- **Osan Middle School:** This ROKFC funded project constructed a new three-story 96,940-square-foot middle school for 350 students at Osan Air Base, Korea. The project included a 3-level parking structure with rooftop athletic facilities, and adjacent athletic field. The \$18 million project was completed in June 2009.

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/2-2-2**

- Virtual School Hubs: Both of these time-sensitive, high-priority projects were completed in time for the beginning of the 2009-2010 School Year:
  - Camp Humphreys, Korea: This school was established within the new Education Center building located on Camp Humphreys.
  - Wiesbaden, Germany: This school was established in the American Arms, co-located with the DoDEA-Europe Area Office
- Fort Knox High School: This \$18.1 million dollar project replaced the older portion of the existing school and included 20 classrooms, media center, and cafeteria. Renovations were also completed on the existing gymnasium.
- Delalio Gym and Music Room: A new 6500-square-foot gym and music room was completed during the summer for Delalio Elementary School at Camp Lejeune, N.C. This facility replaces several temporary facilities and provides a much needed remedy to a substandard physical education facility.

### **Assessment Achievement in DoDEA Schools**

DoDEA will release results of the 2009 *TerraNova, Third Edition*, Multiple Assessments (*TerraNova 3*) in mid-September.

The NCES report, "Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)," found that DoDEA was only one of two states whose gap was smaller than the nation's average gap in all of the grade and subject areas studied in the report. DoDEA's score gaps are consistently below 20 points on the test's 500-point scale. The national average gap across grade levels four and eight was 27.5 points.

DoDEA's schools continue to have some of the smallest achievement gaps between Black and White students of all ages according to results recently released in a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/3-3-3**

### **School Year 2009-2010 Initiatives**

#### **DoDEA Standards Update**

##### ***What are standards and what impact do they have on students in the classroom?***

Curriculum, instruction and assessment are the important elements for obtaining high student achievement. Conducting comprehensive reviews of curricular programs and standards ensures system-wide alignment. Coherent academic standards are critical in guiding school level improvement plans, professional development and program evaluations. Well articulated standards serve as the basis for gathering data about how we assess student and school progress.

Content standards require ongoing review and periodic updates. Recently, curriculum specialists together with classroom teachers reviewed and made recommended updates for all DoDEA core curriculum standards. DoDEA contracted Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), to provide objective guidance and rate the updated standards on breadth, depth, clarity and specificity.

The updated standards, for the most part, are the same with regard to breadth and depth; but the revisions reflect more clarity and specificity. The updated standards are easier to read, include examples of what the standards should “look like,” and give teachers a clearer picture of the grade level and content expectations.

As of July 2009, all core academic content standards (i.e., Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and English Language Arts) received a favorable rating from McREL.

The updated standards are published on the DoDEA website, with the exception of the high school mathematics standards, which are expected to be approved by McREL during the school year.

##### ***What role will standards play in the classroom?***

As a school system, DoDEA has spent several years training teachers on how to use standards so that all our teachers have the same expectations for rigor and excellence.

Standards are the foundation of sound teaching and sustainable student achievement. They provide the basis for gathering data, assessing student progress, and are a road map towards continuous improvement.

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/4-4-4**

DoDEA is helping teachers:

- Become familiar with the DoDEA content standards.
- Incorporate standards into instructional planning for the school year. Lessons, activities and projects will be designed and selected as they relate to specific concepts or skills identified by the DoDEA content standards.
- Develop standards-based lessons that require students to think critically and apply their knowledge. Inquiry and problem solving will be a part of daily lessons presented in the classroom.
- Connect standards to other content area concepts, procedures and understandings as well as to the world.
- Promote greater classroom discourse by expanding the use of questioning techniques and requiring students to explain their thinking both orally and in writing. Giving students ample time and opportunity to question, examine, conjecture, and experiment during lessons will improve their ability to reason.

Working collaboratively with educators and administrators to implement standards-based instruction will help DoDEA enhance instructional practices and increase student performance and achievement.

### **Task Groups**

In School Year 2008-2009, nine different task groups began addressing the areas of K-12 Mathematics, Pre-Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy, Professional Technical Studies, Professional Development: Data Driven Differentiation, Professional Development: Administrator Performance Appraisal, and Virtual School. The task group participants meet several times throughout the school year and represent a cross section of educators, administrators, and association representatives from all levels of DoDEA including the most important level – the classroom.

The task groups in each topic area are charged with a variety of duties including reviewing data, current issues and program evaluations, and student achievement information. Following their reviews, they will make recommendations to the DODEA Director and Deputy Director for improvement, modifications, or the elimination of programs. Task groups meet until their activities are completed and in some cases this may span several years.

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/5-5-5**

The majority of the Task Groups established in School Year 2008-2009 will continue to work during School Year 2009-2010. Four new Task Groups will begin work in the fall of 2009. They include: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Steering Committee, Middle School Review, Early Childhood Education, and Scheduling/Staffing.

### ***GradeSpeed***

*GradeSpeed* is a web-based program that enables parents to log-in to view grade and attendance data for their student(s). *GradeSpeed* will be the only authorized and supported grade book used by DoDEA employees in Grades 4-12. DoDEA looks to increase parental participation in the *GradeSpeed* program during School Year 2009-2010.

All teachers have secure access to *GradeSpeed* through the use of an Internet web browser. Teachers use the grade book portion of *GradeSpeed* to enter assignments, grades, and to maintain grade calculations. Teachers are also able to email progress reports to parents through *GradeSpeed*.

*GradeSpeed* is just one of DoDEA's continuous improvement initiatives designed to ensure highest student achievement. When parents have timely information about student progress and are involved in the education of their student, the entire learning environment is improved. *GradeSpeed* enhances that all-important connection between home and the school.

*GradeSpeed* makes communication between parents and teachers easier, more effective and timelier. Since *GradeSpeed* is web-based, the program can be accessed from anywhere. Parents who are deployed will be able to stay informed and involved in their child's academic life regardless of location.

Parents can access *GradeSpeed* via the Parent Portal. Parents must register at: <http://dodea.gradespeed.net> to establish a personal *GradeSpeed* access account. After their account has been established, parents will be able to login to view grade and attendance data only for their student. They will also be able to view school announcements and calendar events. There is a note feature available in *GradeSpeed* that parents can use to directly contact their student's teachers.

Parents, remember the following:

- *GradeSpeed* is not intended to replace face-to-face communication between parents and teachers in meetings and parent conferences.
- A teacher's primary job is to teach! While communication with parents enhances the educational experience, parents must be reasonable about expectations on the posting of grades and responsiveness. Please remember to be patient when waiting for an email response.

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## DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/6-6-6

- While students may have concerns about how much information parents will have, the truth is children with parents who are involved in their education have a much greater chance to be successful.
- Always keep your email address current.

For more information, go to: [http://www.dodea.edu/back\\_to\\_school/gradeSpeed.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/back_to_school/gradeSpeed.cfm) or contact your local principal.

## DoDEA Begins Implementing New School Information System (SIS)

In July 2009, DoDEA began a worldwide pilot of a new school information system (SIS) to manage student data and applications. The selected application, *X2 Aspen*, is a product of X2 Development Corporation, a leading provider of integrated student information system software for K-12 school districts in the United States.

The system being tested is expected to improve data management through time-saving workflow technologies and through automating time-consuming data collection and reporting processes.

In School Year 2005-06, DoDEA implemented its current student information system, *Student Management Solutions* or *SMS*. The fielding of *SMS* was met with technical, scheduling and cost difficulties resulting in concerns from parents and DoDEA employees. DoDEA chartered a task force to improve the *SMS* and address system-wide requirements.

The task force conducted a thorough study and research of the issues, and provided recommendations to improve the system. The task force's long-term strategy focuses first and foremost on school-level requirements. Every level of the DoDEA school system was involved in these studies which included focus group research and a thorough needs assessment.

The information the task force obtained through its studies and research was used to develop a contract solicitation for a SIS system. After a full and open bid process, *X2 Aspen* was chosen. The pilot will be implemented in School Year 2009-2010 in the locations listed below. If the pilot of *X2 Aspen* is successful, DoDEA's new SIS will replace the current system by the summer of 2010 worldwide.

The pilot program will take place in 12 DoDEA Schools and in the Virtual School Hubs during School Year 2009-2010:

- **Pacific:** Sasebo ES; Edgren HS; Kadena HS; and Andersen ES.
- **Europe:** Kaiserslautern MS; Kaiserslautern HS; Incirlik ES/HS; and Brussels ES/HS.

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/7-7-7**

- **Stateside:** Quantico MS/HS; Dahlgren ES/MS; Lejeune HS; and McNair ES.
- **Virtual School Hubs :** Wiesbaden, Germany and Camp Humphreys, Korea

Parents of students enrolled in the schools above will receive additional information and demonstrations of the new system.

For more information about *X2 Aspen*, visit <http://www.x2dev.com>

## **Early Childhood Education**

DoDEA completed a review of an initiative that would reduce its Kindergarten Program Pupil-to-Teacher (PTR) to 18:1 from the current standard of 29:1. The 18:1 PTR will be implemented in 19 schools that were identified as some of the locations having the highest kindergarten enrollments for School Year 2009-2010 and where principals have indicated they have the facilities to accommodate this ratio. The Kindergarten PTR initiative will mean the addition of 19 teachers and 19 full-time educational aides for School Year 2009-2010. As additional facilities become available to support the reduced Kindergarten PTR, more classes will be added across the DoDEA system.

## **Leadership and Organizational News**

Changes inside and outside the classroom are in store as DoDEA begins School Year 2009-2010. Perhaps the most important change outside the classroom will be the implementation of DoDEA's reorganization initiative that began in School Year 2008-2009.

DoDEA began its reorganization process with a review of every position above the school level. It was found that each area and district had a unique way of staffing and there were inconsistencies in the way schools were supported. In order to maximize resources and provide consistent support for the mission, DoDEA decided a realignment was necessary.

In collaboration with Area Directors and District Superintendents have developed a reorganization plan was developed that would better support DoDEA's efforts to support data-driven decision making, the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) process, and more importantly, incorporate the concept of continuous improvement into every aspect of a child's education. This reorganization focuses on student needs by placing assets and resources as close to school as possible to meet student needs, increase student achievement, and achieve the goals of DoDEA's Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/8-8-8**

DoDEA's reorganization focuses on several different initiatives at the administrative and school level:

- Realignment in reporting and supervision structure for Curriculum and Instruction: DoDEA's administrative and curricular structure was reorganized to better align instructional leadership and support staff closer to the schools in order to provide districts and schools more support. This alignment, in addition to the work already done to align standards with curriculum, instruction and assessment will allow DoDEA teachers, students and parents to be better informed and better prepared at every grade level. District superintendents will report to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, who will report to the Principal Deputy Director and Associate Director for Education.
- Realignment of Area Directors' responsibilities. In order to capitalize on the experience of DoDEA's most senior leaders in the field, Area Directors have been assigned different responsibilities for School Year 2009-2010 to bring a fresh approach to field operations. The Area Directors will be responsible for directly interfacing with military commanders, managing budgets, Military Construction (MILCON), facilities, renovation, maintenance, safety and security, logistics, and co-curricular activities. The refocusing of the Area Directors' responsibilities will eliminate a fragmented focus they previously had between performing their day-to-day operations, strategic planning, education, instruction, and curriculum.
- Assignment of Supervisory Support Specialists to schools to coordinate school business operations: A Supervisory Support Specialist will be working at most schools to coordinate day-to-day business operations associated with running a school. This additional support will allow principals to devote their efforts and expertise to instructional leadership, focusing on education, curriculum, instruction, and highest student achievement. The Supervisory Support Specialists do not supervise educators.

In addition to DoDEA's reorganization initiative, the Area Directors in Europe and the Pacific exchanged leadership positions. Ms. Diana Ohman, former Director of DODEA schools in Europe, will begin a new assignment as the Director of DoDEA schools in the Pacific. Dr. Nancy Bresell, former Director of DoDEA's schools in the Pacific, will begin her new assignment as the Director of DoDEA schools in Europe. The change is another important part of DoDEA's ongoing efforts and initiatives toward continuous improvement through a review, evaluation, and refinement of its educational programs, curriculum, processes, and systems.

The change will be advantageous to the schools in each area by allowing for the benefits a different leadership perspective will bring to each school system and also provide the directors with the opportunity to broaden and further develop their career experience as senior government executives by leading new organizations.

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## **DoDEA Schools Begin 2009-2020 School Year/9-9-9**

### **More Information about DoDEA Available Online**

Additional information about DoDEA schools is available on the system's web site, [www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu). Parents can access information such as school locations, addresses, school contact information, school calendars, immunization and registration requirements, curriculum guides, and school lunch programs.

### **Accomplishments from SY 2008-2009**

Accomplishments completed during School Year 2008-2009 are outlined in the end of the school message found at [http://www.dodea.edu/close\\_of\\_school/index.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/close_of_school/index.cfm).