

# From the Director

In 1996-97, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), through its Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS), and its overseas Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS), operated 233 public schools serving the children of military and civilian Department of Defense personnel. Its schools served 115,390 students in seven states, Puerto Rico, and 15 foreign countries. DoDEA is unique among all other public school organizations in the world. With student bodies representing every state and territory in the United States, and as ethnically diverse as the country itself, DoDDS and DDESS are truly "America's school systems."



By the Year 2000, DoDEA will be a *learner-centered* organization . . . *unbound by traditional* school concepts of time, location and age requirements, and . . . recognized for its ability to provide students with the knowledge and high level skills required for *success* in a *global community*.

## A Brief History

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Over 50 years ago, the United States military established schools for the children of their occupying forces in Europe and in the Pacific while also maintaining some schools on military bases within the continental United States. Originally administered by the Service branches whose children they served, the growing number of schools soon transferred to civilian managers. The schools were then organized in two separate but parallel systems: the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) overseas, and the Section 6, or, more recently named the Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) in the United States. In 1994, the two systems united under the DoDEA to achieve the educational goals set out in the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan.

## A Look Ahead

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A collaborative effort among all sectors of our community of learners led to the development of the vision for our system, a vision which generates both organizational reform and the establishment of very specific performance goals for our students and for our schools. This vision is an expression of our aspirations for our children, commitment to continual systemic improvement, and confidence in the collective wisdom and talent of our stakeholders. It is the construct that reflects who we are and what we are in the process of becoming. It provides the underpinnings for programmatic initiatives and drives resource allocations. Our vision is what has come to define our efforts and to shape our identity as innovative and highly successful school systems.

## Vision and Commitment

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A vision statement is generally written in such general language that it can rarely do more than inspire. Moving from inspiration and aspiration to achievement requires an action plan. The DoDEA Community Strategic Plan is just that. It details the goals and benchmarks that are milestones on the way to becoming the school systems described in the DoDEA vision statement. Ten interdependent education goals were identified as requirements for achieving the DoDEA vision. A number of benchmarks were developed to define discrete, measurable performance criteria for each of the goals. Every year specific goals and benchmarks will be selected as priorities.

This two volume publication offers a glimpse of DoDEA during the second year of its projected 5-year transformation process. The 1996-97 student performance data are included in both the Accountability Report and the Accountability Profiles and can be compared to those of previous years, including the baseline data of school year 1995-96.