



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 1999

## **DoDEA TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE, OPEN FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN, AND PILOT SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA - Dr. Lillian Gonzalez, Director of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), today announced the inclusion of additional funding in the President's budget to expand educational programs in both the DoDDS and DDESS schools beginning in School Year 1999-2000. These program modifications will permit the reduction of class size in grades 1 through 3, expand current half-day kindergarten to a full day program in all overseas schools (full day kindergarten is already in place in DoDEA's domestic schools), and pilot specialized summer school programs.

"I know how much this will mean to our parents and our students." Stated Gonzalez. "Receiving resources to begin these programs is a major accomplishment resulting from extraordinary efforts and partnerships. CINCEUR, CINCPAC, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller and DoDEA staff all played vital roles in ensuring that DoDEA's students receive not only quality educational opportunities, but opportunities consistent with those provided in our public schools and deemed by the President to be of the highest priority.

For the past four years we have been campaigning for the funds required to expand our kindergarten program and reduce class size. To get both approved along with our pilot summer school project was particularly gratifying. These changes will bring us even closer to achieving the DoDEA vision, and will help ensure the expansion

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and improvement of our instructional programs for students in their most formative years. None of this would have been possible without the active collaboration and support of our military partners. We thank them for their help in strengthening our bid for these worthwhile programs.”

The implementation of the full day kindergarten program ensures that all students in both overseas and domestic schools have available full day rather than half-day programs, while reducing pupil teacher ratios will further enhance learning opportunities and improve the quality of instruction. By implementing these programs, Department of Defense schools will now offer programs consistent with trends in U.S. public schools, which further support President Clinton’s education goals and priorities including those set out in his recent State of the Union message.

The full day kindergarten program and the reduced pupil teacher ratio program in DoDEA schools will be phased in over the next six years. In School Year 1999-2000 the programs will begin at those school that the have available classroom space. Throughout this timeframe, DoDEA will construct and renovate classrooms so that by School Year 2004-2005 these programs will be available in all its schools throughout the world.

In keeping with the national trend to provide summer school opportunities as a way to further enhance academic excellence, the funding allows DoDEA to pilot a specialized school program during the summers of 2000 and 2001. The sites and structure of the summer school program will be developed through a collaboration of educators and community members.

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