



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2003 DoDEA Principals of the Year to be Honored at Washington, D.C. Ceremonies

Each year, the Department of Defense Education Activity proudly participates in two national programs in order to recognize outstanding principals at the elementary, middle and secondary levels. The 2003 DoDEA Selectees, in their respective programs, are as follows (click on a name to see a full biography and photograph):

2003 National Distinguished Principals of the Year (Elementary & Middle Schools)

DDESS:

Dr. Tom Dignan

Principal, Freddie Stowers Elementary School

Fort Benning, Georgia

DoDDS:

Dr. Russell "Russ" Claus

Principal, Darmstadt American Elementary School

Darmstadt, Germany

National Distinguished Principals Ceremony

Event sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in corporate sponsorship with AIG VALIC.

National Distinguished Principal of the Year Banquet

Awards - November 7th

Dinner - November 7th

JW Marriott Hotel

1331 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, DC 20004

Phone: 202-393-2000

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**2003 DoDEA National High School Principal of the Year
(Middle & Secondary Schools)**

Dr. Janette Klinke
Principal, Lakenheath Middle School
Lakenheath, United Kingdom

National High School Principal of the Year Ceremony

Event sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
and MetLife.

NASSP - Secondary Principal of the Year Awards Banquet
November 15th - Reception begins at 6:00 followed by dinner
Renaissance Washington Hotel
999 Ninth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-4427
Phone: 202-898-9000

Background on the National Distinguished Principals Program (Elementary & 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 VALIC. The two-day event highlights the fundamental importance of the school principal in achieving educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students. The recognition afforded by the NDP designation instills pride in principals' accomplishments and reinforces their continued leadership in helping children develop a lifelong love of learning.

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. (See State Affiliates' Membership Links.) Honorees from private schools and overseas schools are selected by special committees.

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The awards ceremonies take place in Washington, D.C., each fall. They include special tours and activities as well as professional interaction among the honorees. The two-day celebration culminates in a formal awards banquet.

The following criteria reflect elements of existing requirements in current state principal recognition programs. Nominees must meet all criteria for selection as a National Distinguished Principal.

The selected principal:

- is an active principal of a school in which a commitment is clearly evident through programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students, and through firmly established community ties with parents and local business organizations;
- has been an active principal for at least five years;
- will be an active principal during the year in which he/she will receive the award;
- shows a strong commitment to the principalship through active membership in professional associations;
- is respected by students, colleagues, parents, and the community at large;
- assumes an active role in his/her community, distinguishing himself/herself as a leader in civic, religious, or humanitarian activities;
- shows strong educational leadership by setting high expectations for school staff and students; and
- maintains an orderly, purposeful learning environment.

Evidence of outstanding contributions to the well-being of the educational community include:

- ways in which the principal's leadership has benefited curriculum, staff morale, community support, student interest, and the learning environment;
- ways in which the principal provides creative leadership to inspire teachers and others to achieve and contribute to the school environment;
- examples of service or achievements above and beyond what is expected in the usual school program;
- ways in which others have acknowledged the principal as a force for positive change.

Source: <http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=924&action=print>

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Background on the National High School Principal of the Year Program (Middle & Secondary Schools):

Good principals help students set goals.... Great principals inspire students to achieve them.... Launched in 1993, the MetLife/National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Principal of the Year program annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. It has become a nationally-known vehicle for spotlighting secondary school principals whose schools include some configuration of grades 6-12. Those honored are ones who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, commitment to students and staff, service to their communities, and contributions to the overall profession of educational leadership.

Selection Criteria:

Educational Leadership

- implements strategies for improving teaching and learning by putting programs and improvement efforts into action.
- involves teachers and other staff members in achieving the goals of the school.
- ensures the school climate is positive and reflects high staff and student morale.

Resolving Complex Problems

- maintains awareness of current and emerging issues.
- resolves short-term issues while balancing them against long-term objectives.
- manages time and tasks effectively including delegation to others.

Developing Self and other

- is committed to continued professional growth
- teaches, coaches and helps others (students and colleagues)
- demonstrates and fosters creativity and imagination in bringing about positive change.

Community Service

- involves the community in the life of the school and uses community resources for students.
- establishes partnership with community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals.

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity select one middle level and one high school principal. From these state winners, 6 finalists (3 middle level, 3 high school) are selected and eligible for the National Principal of the Year award.

Each finalist receives an award and a \$1,500 grant. The National Principals of the Year receive an award and an additional \$5,000. These grants are used to improve learning at the recipient's school, including, but not limited to, a special school project and/or professional development opportunities.

Source: <http://www.nassp.org/awards/09-01.cfm>

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**DoDEA 2003 National Distinguished
Principal of the Year □
Dr. Thomas Dignan □
Freddie Stowers Elementary School □**

Tom relies on his School Improvement Team to provide the educational blueprint for Stowers Elementary School. The vision that emanates from the collaborative efforts of the team provides the educational focus for the school, to include the professional development requirements. Parents and community members are involved in the process, a fact that has strengthened the bond between school and community. Recognition of the importance of parents in the educational process is addressed through the Very Involved Parent Program (VIP) where, once a month, parents come to school and take an active part in their child's class. The program validates Tom's strong belief that internal communication between staff members, and external communication with parents and the military community is critical to successfully maintaining a high-performing educational environment.



Tom is a strong advocate for professional development. He states, "As an administrator, it is my job to recognize the areas of the curriculum that will lead to the highest achievement among the students and then provide the staff the opportunity to thoroughly understand and deliver the program." His belief is that job-embedded staff development has greater impact on the school's teaching and learning environment.

Tom understands and fulfills his role as the school's instructional leader. His current

focus is in the area of reading where he is adamant that every child has the opportunity to succeed and grow in reading. He reads with students participating in Reading Recovery, and has helped develop a number of programs and activities designed to enhance students' reading skills. Among these are the Family Reading Night, the Stowers Read Program, Families Reading Every Night (FRED), and Reading Under the Stars. The school also hosts guest readers throughout the year.

In addition to his classroom teaching career Tom has served as principal of Baumholder High School, Germany and Faith Middle School, Fort Benning, Georgia. He is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Tom earned his BA from High Point College, North Carolina, and his EdD from the University of Florida.

**DoDEA 2003 NAESP Principal of the Year □
Dr. Russell "Russ" Claus
Darmstadt American Elementary School**

Reflecting on his thoughts as a leader Russ states, "As a leader of any organization it is important to include all members of the team as mission developers as well as participants." Based on this belief, an atmosphere of empowerment is pervasive within Darmstadt Elementary School. The faculty, parents, and community members are provided avenues to voice their opinions on areas that impact the teaching and learning within the school, as well as the role the school plays in the community.

In a community where a very high percentage of the sponsors are deployed, Russ holds a Friday morning coffee group in the school cafeteria where he and the school psychologist provide information on current community programs, encourage people to buddy up with one another, and to volunteer in the school. His role as the instructional leader is demonstrated by doing, more than by saying.

Russ has formally promoted the peer observation process within the school and linked it to two school level professional development programs, the student teacher program, and a methods and materials class that he teaches. The methods class is composed of student teachers, regular classroom teachers, and paraprofessionals. To facilitate the peer observation process Russ arranges classroom coverage for a 45 minute block in order that a teacher may observe the teaching and learning occurring in a colleague's classroom.

Russ also teaches a Science Mentor class each Friday and a Mathematics □

Challengers class before school each Tuesday..



To facilitate the school's Individual Guided Tutoring Program, he devised a plan that utilizes the support staff as well as the professional staff in order to provide a private tutor to each student in need of reading support. Russ, all members of the office staff, and supply specialists provide student assistance during the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time. The chief custodian, paraprofessionals, and special subject teachers volunteer their time during lunch or planning time to work as tutors. Because of his leadership by example, Russ is highly praised by teachers, parents, and the military command.

In addition to his classroom teaching career Russ has served as principal of Zukeran Elementary School, Okinawa, Japan, Site Team Leader for Gelnhausen and Sportfield Elementary Schools, Germany, and the Mathematics Coordinator for the former Hessen, Germany District. Russ is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa, National Staff Development Council, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Kansas State University, and his Doctor of Philosophy/Organizational Leadership from the University of Oklahoma.

DoDEA 2003 Principal of the Year
Dr. Jannett Klinke
Lakenheath Middle School

Dr. Klinke's primary objective upon assuming the position of principal at Lakenheath Middle School was to facilitate the development or refinement of the school's vision and focus. To achieve the development and buy-in for the new vision, and a greater focus on improved student achievement, she instituted fundamental operational and structural changes within the school complex comprised of 12 buildings spread over 15 acres. Dr. Klinke utilized her knowledge of the change process and established procedures that permitted greater decision making by team leaders and a reduction in faculty isolation.

It was determined that a change in the school schedule was required in order to facilitate greater collaboration and to establish a better foundation for change to occur. Over a two year period the staff, students and community created a schedule that supported the middle school concept and laid a foundation for the school to reach its school improvement goal in reading. Within one year of implementation, 41% of the returning students had increased their Grade Point Average. Parallel to the scheduling objective was one to match teacher instruction and curriculum.



The success of her effort was validated by a curriculum audit that found overwhelming evidence of alignment between curriculum standards and

classroom instruction. As stated by one of her staff members, "Dr. Klinke leads by example." During her tenure at Lakenheath Middle School students have become more responsive, teachers have become more collaborative, and the community is more involved and supportive of the school.

Dr. Klinke began her educational career as a teacher in Plains, Montana. Her view on education has been enhanced through work-related experiences at the elementary, middle, high school, and collegiate levels. Twenty-two of her years in education have been as a school administrator. She has held the position of principal at Lakenheath Middle School since August 2000. Prior to this assignment she served as assistant principal of Lakenheath High School.

Dr. Klinke earned her BA from the University of California, San Diego. Her Doctorate in Educational Administration was earned from Oklahoma State University.

For interviews, please contact:

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