

# COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES for PRINCIPALS

**04/2014**

## ABOUT

*Principles for Principals offers key information and messages for principals to consider in communicating the basics and getting parents involved. It is written and published by the DoDEA Communications Office.*

## CONTACT US

### DoDEA HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

4800 Mark Center Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22350

### FRANK O'GARA

Director, Communications  
desk: 571-372-0613  
cell: 571-435-6459  
email: frank.o'gara@hq.dodea.edu

### ELAINE KANELLIS

Deputy Chief, Communications  
desk: 571-372-0614  
cell: 703-344-3474  
email: elaine.kanellis@hq.dodea.edu

### VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

[www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu)

## MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD AND PURPLE UP!

This issue of PR for Principals is designed to focus on the Month of the Military Child and Purple up! April is the Month of the Military Child and is designed to recognize and support children and youth who are part of military families, regardless of branch or type of service. Military connected students face challenges that are unique to their situation, such as deployments, separation and frequent moves. We at DoDEA are encouraging our schools to celebrate the Month of the Military Child throughout the month of April and to wear purple on April 30th in global solidarity as a sign of support and appreciation for our military-connected children.

Each year, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) helps promote the Month of the Military Child. Throughout the month, DoDEA encourages schools to plan special events to honor military children and have administrators and principals incorporate the themes of this month into their everyday duties and responsibilities. These efforts and special events will stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed.

To assist schools with planning, DoDEA has compiled the attached package containing event/activity ideas, talking points, and promotion ideas.

School leaders can use this package to stimulate discussion in schools and communities on ways to commemorate this important month. Be sure to bring events to the attention of local military community public affairs officers (PAOs) and your district and area PAOs, as well.

*Numerous military commands will plan special events to honor military children. These events will stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed in the mobile military lifestyle.*

## BACKGROUND

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. Sponsored by the Department of Defense Military Community and Family Policy, the Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome.

The Month of the Military Child is part of the legacy left by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. He established the Defense Department commemoration in 1986.

Throughout the month, numerous military commands will plan special events to honor military children. These events will stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed in the mobile military lifestyle. These special activities include arts and crafts shows, picnics, carnivals, fairs, parades, block parties and other special activities, focusing on military children that highlight the unique contributions they make.

DoDEA joins the Department of Defense and the military community in celebrating April as the Month of the Military Child. At DoDEA, we know that military children face many challenges unique to their situation, such as having a parent deployed for extended periods of time and moving frequently. Deployments and family separations can be stressful times for children. DoDEA schools are part of the wide community support network available to families. Teachers, counselors, and psychologists guide honest and open discussions with students. Schools link deployed parents and students by email and other technologies. Our most important contribution is to remain focused on the educational mission and provide a stable environment for the children in our schools especially during these times of stress.

Throughout the month, DoDEA will encourage schools to plan special events to honor military children and have administrators and principals incorporate the themes of this month into their everyday duties and responsibilities. These efforts and special events will stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed in the mobile military lifestyle.

## THEMES

- ◆ “Month of the Military Child”
- ◆ “Purple Up!” Allow students and sports teams, teachers and staff to wear purple on April 30<sup>th</sup> to support our military-connected students.

## EVENT/ACTIVITY IDEAS

Consider using some of the event and activity ideas listed below in planning your school's Month of the Military Child Celebration:

**Purple Up!** – Wednesday April 30th, encourage administration, students and faculty to wear purple. Operation Military Kids (OMK) an organization dedicated to military families, is asking people around the nation to join them for an event they call, "Purple Up! For Military Kids." They are encouraging everyone across the U.S. to choose a day in April to wear purple, as a visible way to show support and thank our military children for their strength and sacrifices. We at DoDEA have designated Wednesday April 30, 2014, to Purple Up! The goal is for all DoDEA Schools to try to celebrate at the same time as a school system in support of our military children. Schools may choose a different day to schedule Purple Up! if April 30th date conflicts with previous plans.

This is OMK's fourth year of celebrating Purple Up!

**Take Pictures** – Have picture taken of the display of purple unity on the 30th (or chosen day), as well as activities throughout the month. Send them to [natalia.thaniel@hq.dodea.edu](mailto:natalia.thaniel@hq.dodea.edu) to represent your school and our school system for a global picture slideshow on the DoDEA website, or as postings on the DoDEA Facebook and or Flickr pages.

**Salute to Military Children at Sporting Events** – Have the announcer make a special announcement before, during or after sporting events, recognizing all military children. Have them raise the flag, sing the National Anthem or recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Web Site Feature** – Schools can promote the Month of the Military Child on their web sites. Provide links to sites that offer resources for military families.

**Publicize Installation/Community Events** – Use the school newsletter to publicize Month of the Military Child events and activities hosted by the installation/community. Look for ways schools can contribute to these celebrations (setting up an information or activity booth, having teachers volunteer at events and activities, etc.).

**Host an Assembly for Month of the Military Child** – Hold a school assembly honoring military children. Include a performance by the band. Have students write a poem about what it means to be a military child and select several student volunteers to read their poems.

**Sponsor a Poster Project for Month of the Military Child**– Have each class work on a class poster depicting their interpretation of what it's like to be a military child and what it means to be a military child. Have each class display their poster in a common area such as the lobby, gymnasium, cafeteria or hallways. Allow students to vote for their favorite poster and then feature the top posters on the school web page and around the school.

**Teachers Salute Military Children** – Have teachers at your school make a special project with their classes such as a picture frame, bookmark, journal, etc., that ties into the Month of the Military Child.

## RESOURCES

Many organizations will host activities, events and tributes to military children during the month of April. Here are just a few websites to show some of the events and ideas being shared by other organizations:

[www.monthofthemilitarychild.com](http://www.monthofthemilitarychild.com)

[www.ourmilitarykids.org/](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org/)

[www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil)

## SAMPLE MORNING OR AFTERNOON ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ April is Month of the Military Child and we want to make sure you know how glad we are to have you in our school.

- ◆ Being in a military family can be challenging. We want you to know that we are very proud of you for the sacrifices you make and the obstacles you overcome.
- ◆ Military kids rock! Thanks for everything you do for your military family. Our nation needs you.
- ◆ Military kids see the world, meet new people and have all kinds of interesting experiences. You are ambassadors for the U.S. and we are proud of you.

## MESSAGE POINTS

- ◆ The Month of the Military Child is a time to recognize military families and their children for the sacrifices they make, the resilience they display and the challenges they overcome. Join DoDEA in celebrating these youngest members of our military family as we celebrate the Month of the Military Child.
- ◆ DoDEA will Purple Up! on April 30<sup>th</sup> to show global solidarity in appreciation of our military children. DoDEA has chosen April 30<sup>th</sup> as it is one of the few days in April when DoDEA schools worldwide are in session.
- ◆ This celebration provides a great opportunity for our school leaders and teachers to underscore the importance of our mission and the commitment we have to military families.
- ◆ Our children make many sacrifices growing up in a military family. From frequent moves to knowing their parent is serving in a dangerous place, military children must develop resiliency at a young age. This strength is something they carry with them throughout life and it is a testament to the strength and resolve of our nation's military members who serve as role models every day for their children.
- ◆ DoDEA educators constantly strive to ensure highest student achievement. Our schools welcome students, teach them, and work hard to prepare them for the future. The children of our service members have much to contribute to their schools, their communities and the nation.
- ◆ DoDEA strives to provide support to students and their families in all areas of development – academic, athletic and social and emotional. DoDEA is proud and fortunate to serve military families and is especially honored to be able to educate military-children.