Transcript

It's a Joint Force on AFN, the eagles, serving America's best and today we're joined by Mr. Tom Brady, the DoDEA Director. Sir, it's great to have you, thanks for being here.

Well thank you, Michael it is great to be here.

So, I know it's a big 75th anniversary for you guys and also for us here at AFN, it's our 80th anniversary. So, a couple big years for us here.

Yeah, absolutely and it's remarkable to look at the history of AFN for the last 80 years, serving America's finest.

And DoDEA for the last 75 years, right?

That's quite a good chunk of time that we've been over here doing it and so it's a big happy birthday to us.

It's also graduation season so that's another big thing that we have going on right now and I'm sure you got the chance to actually attend some of these great ceremonies. What can you tell me about that?

I did. It was a real honor for me to come over and see the great men and women who are graduating at our high schools. I went to Hohenfels, Vilseck, and Ansbach and what struck me is this is the first year those graduates had an opportunity to be together and actually walk across the stage and celebrate with their families and their school staff.

And it was just a wonderful time. I know the last two years has been so hard for everybody here and when I think particularly about our high school seniors who miss the opportunity for proms and graduations as a group, it really made my heart sore when I saw the graduates this year.

Right, getting back to some sense of normalcy and like you said, it's definitely been a challenging past couple years for everyone. But also, especially at those schools, because I'm sure that many schools actually had to be forced to close. But I did hear that you guys, after doing all these interviews, have been doing very well over here throughout all of these obstacles and overcoming them. So, we discussed previously with Dr Brahaney, however, that DoDEA was uniquely successful in avoiding those.

So, what would you say have been the keys to DoDEA’s success over here?

Thanks for the question. There were three or four keys to success. Number one is that our teachers are so remarkably resilient. When the virus first struck in Italy, within four days they were able to switch to a remote platform so their classes could be done on the computer at home, which is not acceptable --we much prefer face-to-face.

Right but that was a great alternative and again that's the flexibility of the parents the students and the teachers to be able to do that.

And then the strict adherence to the protocols that were developed in terms of distancing and masking to keep our children safe. Teachers were tremendous and students learn obviously in face-to-face. It's a much better way to do it.

And so, we excelled in the ability to keep our buildings open and safe. And our staff and administrators did a wonderful job. And we see improvements, believe it or not, in student achievement. Many school districts in the United States weren't as blessed as we are in terms of flexibility talent and the ability to have the hot spots and the technology right to make that transition so very successful. My hats off to, and thanks to, all the staff at the schools and also the parents. The partnerships that we had with the garrisons were remarkable as well.
Yeah, it's absolutely a huge team effort to make sure that this is all worked out in the way that it did. But, given the success in maintaining your guys in-person instruction, how would you say that the school have done maintaining educational standards? I know you said that they've had some break throughs, or it's actually been improvements.

Yes, there have been, and we based that improvement on a number of things. Number one is that the end-of-year test, which is a summative test, the results indicate that the actual the scores from years past have improved. And that's again from hard work on the part of students and teachers. We also have a standardized test with advanced placement courses that are given in high school. Our students have increased the numbers of AP courses they've taken, and the results of the AP courses are improved from last year. And if you score a three four or five, you get college credits, so parents obviously are very pleased about that three four or five.

And we've seen an increase in those scores and are so very, very pleased.

Learning loss, you hear a lot about.

Learning loss, so this is a case of where we not only kept pace but made sure that we made our students had the standards and the building blocks to ensure their future success. So, everyone's working together making sure that this whole thing runs smoothly, and everyone is learning and even going above and beyond.

Yeah, getting some of those ap courses done knocked out.

We still have plenty more time with Mr Tom Brady the DoDEA Director, so keep it right here to AFN, the eagles serving America's best. Going to be talking about some of their other successes during the pandemic.

[Music]