



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

NEWS RELEASE

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DoDEA Celebrates 75 Years of Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Military-Connected Students

ALEXANDRIA, VA -- The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) celebrates its 75th anniversary during the 2021-2022 School Year, continuing a tradition of excellence in education that began on October 14, 1946.

While a few schools on military bases within the continental United States and its territories were operating prior to World War II, the school system we know today as the Department of Defense Education Activity formally began with the establishment of dependents schools overseas.

Shortly after the end of World War II and the arrival of military families overseas, the Army established a Dependents School Service (DSS) to establish schools for the children of American service members in the occupied countries Germany, Austria and Japan. In the spring of 1946, two Army Majors, Virgil Walker in Germany and Herbert Ingraham in Japan, led the effort. Both officers, experienced educators prior to the war, mobilized to recruit teachers, organize curriculum and develop budgets to support this major logistical effort.

From these humble beginnings, with classrooms in Quonset huts and empty barracks, school operations expanded rapidly. No one could have imagined that those early beginnings would last far longer than the mission of the occupational forces.

Since that foundational year, DoDEA expanded, consolidated and reorganized many times to meet the educational needs of military-connected youth. In 1992, Congress unified the domestic and overseas school operations under the Department of Defense Education Activity.

“While the world has changed dramatically since our system began. The spirit of our teachers and administrators is the same now as it was then --- infused to the core with determination and innovation. DoDEA's core mission remains the same,” said DoDEA Director Tom Brady.

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The 75-year effort has not been without its trials and tribulations, as well as successes. Our organization has overcome conflict, wars, natural disasters, political upheaval, 9/11, COVID-19, and more. DoDEA knows and understands what is important to military families and students – a high quality education and a rigorous curriculum in a caring, dependable, predictable and stable environment.

”A laser-like focus on teaching and learning in our schools, past and present, has better enabled our warriors to make lasting contributions to our nation's defense, and indeed the defense of freedom around the world. As a contributing partner and a key quality of life component within the communities we serve, DoDEA remains committed to providing the best education and care for Servicemembers and their families,” said Brady.

The commemoration will conclude with graduation celebrations at the end of the school year. In between, we will acknowledge important milestones and highlight our history, significant achievements, and people. We’ll look back with gratitude on the remarkable men and women who made it their life’s work to care for, educate, and empower more than 15 million military-connected children who have passed through our doors.

Director Brady remarked that from our early beginnings, we have maintained an ongoing focus on continuous improvement, the future, and our promise and commitment to ensure *Excellence in Education for Every Student, Every Day, Everywhere*.

“As a DoDEA community, we take great pride in our history of accomplishing the mission. While there has been much change over the history of DoDEA, one thing remains constant -- students are at the heart of everything we do,” said Brady.

As a DoD Field Activity today, DoDEA operates 160 schools in eight districts across 11 countries, seven U.S. states and two U.S. territories for more than 67,000 students. The current footprint is configured to provide 21st-century instructional facilities and a world class education in the areas where our Nation’s Servicemembers and their families are located, and we maintain the organizational flexibility required to adapt to the evolving needs of the military services we support.

For more information and resources about the 75th Anniversary, visit the DoDEA website at: <http://www.dodea.edu/75>.