



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY
HEADQUARTERS
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-1400**

OCT 19 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPENDENTS EDUCATION COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Summary of the June 25, 2020 Dependents Education Council

On June 25, 2020, the Dependents Education Council (DEC) convened at the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Headquarters, 4800 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA. The event was hosted by the Mr. Will Bushman, Performing the Duties of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Mr. Thomas Brady, Director, DoDEA, served as Executive Secretary. A copy of the agenda and list of attendees is attached.

Opening Remarks:

Following roll call and introductions, Mr. Brady welcomed the Council and introduced Mr. Bushman to provide opening remarks.

Mr. Bushman reiterated that COVID-19 is impacting everyone and everything. He stressed the importance of planning to address COVID specific issues in the DoDEA schools.

After concluding his opening remarks, Mr. Brady thanked Mr Bushman and recognized Ms Lynn Simpson from U.S. Pacific Fleet on her upcoming retirement. Mr Brady then highlighted the two key words for the upcoming school year: Flexibility and Partnerships. He emphasized the importance of the great partnerships between DoDEA and the military leadership teams as well as the importance of flexibility as we approach the upcoming school year and the unique challenges the COVID-19 pandemic creates.

DoDEA Response to COVID-19.

Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, Chief Academic Officer, reviewed the actions taken by DoDEA during School Year 2019-2020 using a 5 Phased approach: Initial Planning, Early Implementation, Quality Improvement, Assessment of the Model and Next Phase Planning. Each phase highlighted the collaboration efforts between the military leadership teams in all three Regions as well as actions taken in each phase.

Phase 1: Initial Planning

The first DoDEA school closed on Feb 22nd in Daegu. The DoDEA leadership team in the Pacific created a model incorporating training for teachers and support requirements needed to initiate digital learning for all DoDEA students. As digital training expanded, each DoDEA school went from in-person classes to a digital learning environment in 4 days or less. Dr. Michelle Howard-Brahaney, the Europe South District Superintendent, provided an overview of the planning process utilized in her district, incorporating host nation guidance and stressing the importance of the military partnerships in communications and support of the transition to digital learning. Dr

Narvaez then reviewed the timeline of the DoDEA school closures, rolling from the Pacific to Europe and then to the schools in the United States, with the final DoDEA school closing at Guantanamo Bay on March 25th. Augmentation to the existing learning management system was required and google classroom sites were created quickly, going from an initial 2,000 google classroom sites to over 16,000 sites in just two weeks. Daily meetings were also held with all three Regional Leadership teams and the Headquarters staff to address issues created and to provide solutions in the ever-changing environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Narvaez also reviewed the impact on Non-Department of Defense Schools Programs (NDSP). From February to April, schools in nearly all 307 duty stations supported by NDSP were closed.

Phase 2: Early Implementation

Once digital learning was in place, discussions around student equity began. Access to computers and internet as well as meals for children led the conversations and as a result DoDEA issued almost 8,000 computers, 250 Wi-Fi hotspots for families without internet or with poor connectivity and served well over 1.2 million meals. Also, as the workforce began to work from home, IT support created a Virtual Private Network (VPN) infrastructure which could handle 10 times the initial user base. Equity also meant taking care of all students in this new environment. DoDEA worked to meet the needs of students with disabilities and Advanced Academic (formally known as the Gifted Education) students utilizing a number of tools to make sure the students' needs were met. Examples were provided and pictures shared of teachers and students developing creative ways to maximize learning in the new environment.

Mr Bushman asked about the Wi-Fi hotspots that were provided and Mr Mark Patterson, the DoDEA IT Division Chief, provided a detailed report to Mr Bushman on 30 June that contained the requested information.

Mr Bushman also asked about the effectiveness of online instruction. Mr Brady shared that participation and the level of interaction by the student is the key to effectiveness.

Phase 3: Quality Improvement

DoDEA has had an accredited Virtual High School (DVHS) since 2010. Under the leadership of the DVHS Principal, Dr. Terri Marshall, the DVHS online teachers led training sessions for other DoDEA teachers, providing tips on working with students online, grading, and what to do when student engagement dipped. Dr Marshall, the DoDEA Principal of the Year, shared some of the lessons learned from this year. Following Dr Marshall's presentation, the importance of ongoing learning for teachers was highlighted, as well as Parent Universities that were held in many DoDEA districts, offering parents tips in 25 different topics to support their students both socially and academically. Finally, DoDEA grantees expressed their appreciation for the way they were able to continue their work because of DoDEA grants.

Phase 4: Assessment of the Model

DoDEA districts polled parents and students to learn how this new process was impacting their learning and two major themes were identified: concerns about the security within the online environments and parents' concerns about screen time. The

DoDEA IT division quickly addressed security concerns and provided solutions each time new issues arose. DoDEA also evaluated course content to identify essential elements and made adjustments to cut down on the amount of time students had to be in front of the computer so all could finish strong without burning out.

As online education continued, districts and researchers began to focus on engagement. One nationally representative study by University of Washington found school districts had very different levels of online services and expectations, with more than 4 in 10 districts not expecting teachers to monitor student academic progress. Less than half expected teachers to check in with students under distance learning. Given these concerns, DoDEA began to monitor engagement data.

Slides were shown that highlighted the engagement levels of DoDEA students, by grade level. At 97-98% for students in grades 6 thru 12, DoDEA students remained engaged at very high rates turning in assignments and engaging in classroom discussions.

Phase 5: Next Phase Planning

Understanding the difficult PCS timelines, summer camps that are closed, and a desire to stay connected with our students, DoDEA launched an online summer learning program available on-demand and in low-tech versions which could be picked up at the local school. The website provides grades K-8 students and parents educational resources to bridge learning between the current and upcoming school years.

Following the overview of the summer learning program, Dr. Jeff Arrington, the Pacific West District Superintendent, provided an overview of the “soft re-opening” that was conducted at the end of the school year in the DoDEA South Korea schools. His overview provided a review of classroom and common area configurations utilizing social distancing guidelines as well as teacher and student safety practices required while riding school buses and in areas where social distancing procedures could not be obtained.

Dr Narvaez closed the first portion of the DEC by expressing her appreciation to the senior military leaders and the stressing the importance of the critical relationships between district superintendents and installation commanders. This partnership will become even more important moving forward.

Return to School.

Dr Wendy Cooley, Chief of the Capabilities & Initiatives Division, began the second half of the DEC with an overview of the DoDEA Return to School in SY20/21 plan. The presentation began with an introduction highlighting the complexity of the task of re-opening schools amid the COVID-19 global pandemic. She introduced the “Ensuring a Safe and Healthy Return to School” document (published 11 June 2020) which provides social distancing guidelines in various areas of the school and at the different Health Protection Condition (HPCON) levels. This document was created using current Department of Defense (DoD) and Centers of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and whereas it isn’t an exhaustive list of each action that the school leaders can take, it provides a range of solutions for school leaders to consider.

Dr Cooley explained the importance of a collaborative decision-making process between DoDEA and the military commands. Understanding the impact of those decisions on multiple stakeholders and the possible second and third order effects of each

proposal and its impact on the mission must be considered throughout the process. She also emphasized that decisions will be driven by current HPCON levels and consideration of host nation guidance will also be considered.

Dr Cooley then described the DoDEA planning process for the re-opening of schools and reviewed the DoDEA Return to School Essential Topics.

Dr Cooley highlighted that DoDEA plans for a full return to Brick and Mortar school, but concurrently planning for the impact the COVID-19 environment may continue to have and a requirement to create a blended learning model. Blended learning combines online educational materials with traditional face-to-face classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student. This will posture our educators, students, and families to move to a virtual environment if it is deemed necessary due to a second wave or outbreak.

Dr Cooley also discussed the needs of the higher risk populations. This discussion included the educators who are at-risk as well as the families who may have circumstances where they do not wish to or are unable to send their child back to the brick and mortar setting. While DoDEA will establish confidence in our communities through the safety measures taken to protect students and staff, a virtual platform for students will be provided to continue learning remotely.

In closing, Dr Cooley reviewed the School Readiness Reporting currently underway. This reporting is an in-depth review of each school, by Region, to determine if schools have the resources and capacity to open under the current CDC/DOD guidelines. The reviews provide DoDEA senior leaders and staff an opportunity to analyze the current state of school readiness and begin mitigation planning and implementation where needed.

Mr Brian Brindley, Chief of Plans and Operations, continued with additional information on the planning process utilized by DoDEA, highlighting that the process is designed to achieve an appropriate balance between the requirement to establish healthy and safe environments in our schools that are capable of protecting against the spread of the COVID-19 virus with our mission to provide exceptional elementary and secondary educational opportunities. Mr Brindley introduced the DoDEA document created to incorporate COVID-19 planning factors in school operations, entitled "The DoDEA School COVID-19 Operational Guidelines and Protocols". He stressed that this document was still in draft but would be shared with key stakeholders at a later date.

Mr Brindley then provided additional information about the DoDEA School Readiness Review Process. All DoDEA school's readiness is evaluated on nine capacity areas. District and Regional leaders within DoDEA present the status of each school to the DoDEA Director and his staff prior to the start of each school year. This year the newly developed COVID-19 Health and Safety requirements were incorporated into the school readiness review process. COVID-19 health and safety requirements were embedded into each of the nine areas for SY2020/21 and the school mitigation plans identified to address concerns.

Mr Brindley then reviewed the SY20/21 Opening Planning Facts and Assumptions and the application of DoD COVID-19 policy and procedures into the DoDEA planning guidelines. Highlighted was the importance of aligning DoD guidance

to installation commanders for HPCON levels with the key elements of the DoDEA School Opening Planning. DoD guidance currently states that DoDEA schools will not open under HPCON C.

Finally, Mr Brindley reviewed the Application of the DoD COVID-19 Policies and Procedures and the impact those policies may have on DoDEA schools. The four key coordination points emphasized as critical DoDEA planning elements requiring installation and region commanders' awareness and support are listed below:

1. Require students and staff members to undergo daily prescreening at home within two hours of arriving at school.
2. Wearing of face coverings throughout the school day to mitigate the inability of schools to meet the 6-foot social distancing requirement.
3. Digital Instruction provided for Higher Risk Students who are unable to physically attend school during HPCON Bravo conditions.
4. "Tailored" Reasonable Accommodation process for Higher Risk employees.

The presentation portion of the DEC ended, and comments were solicited from the participants.

Comments from participants.

Ms Christy Nolta asked about reasonable accommodations for employees concerned about returning to work. Mr Brady confirmed that the DoDEA staff is working on this issue and reasonable options will be provided to those who are medically at risk. He stressed that teachers are expected to be the classroom.

Mr Will Bushman asked if key resources were needed to make decisions on opening DoDEA schools. Mr Brady stated that DoDEA will work thru Ms Penrod, but nothing was required at this time.

Mr H.L. Larry complimented DoDEA on previous accomplishments, retention of quality personnel and the ability of DoDEA personnel to pivot so quickly and adjust to the COVID environment during the last school year.

Lt Gen Basham recognized Dr McMullen for their partnership. He stressed the importance of being aware of Host Nation conditions and synchronization, when possible.

MG Williams thanked DoDEA for providing guidance going forward. He stressed the importance of the parents, teachers and student's awareness of personal health, especially during COVID-19. If personnel do not feel well, they need to stay home. MG Williams agreed that face coverings needed to be worn during student movement, but questioned the impact that may have on students in the classroom. He also recommended that limited movement in and out of the classroom may minimize risk.

LTG Thomas thanked Ms Rapp and her team. He highlighted the operational impact and importance of the Readiness of the Force, as well as informing the audience of the 14-day Restriction of Movement (ROM) requirement when traveling into theater.

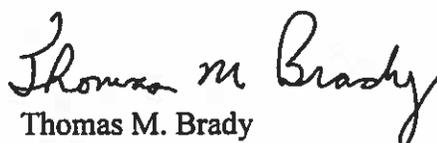
Mr Brady acknowledged awareness of the requirement and inclusion of this planning factor in SY20/21 operations.

Ms Lynn Simpson appreciated the ability of DoDEA to transition to a Virtual school in just 4 days.

Closing comments.

Mr Brady stated that this year will present unique challenges working within the COVID-19 environment and is a work in progress. He stressed that we must be flexible and agile while creating a safe environment that meets the needs of our students. Mr. Brady then thanked the IT teams from all over the world for their help in facilitating the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1209 hrs.


Thomas M. Brady
Director

Attachments
DEC Agenda
DEC List of Participants

AGENDA

Host: *Honorable Mr. Will Bushman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness*
Executive Secretary: *Mr. Thomas Brady, DoDEA Director* **Facilitator:** *Mr. Brian Brindley*

Welcome and Introduction	<i>Mr. Thomas Brady</i>
Host Opening Remarks	<i>Mr. Will Bushman</i>
Executive Secretary Opening Remarks	<i>Mr. Thomas Brady</i>
<i>DODEA RESPONSE to COVID-19</i>	<i>Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, Chief Academic Officer</i>
	<i>Dr. Michelle Howard-Brahaney</i>

BREAK

<i>RETURN to SCHOOL</i>	<i>Dr. Wendy Cooley</i>
<i>RETURN to SCHOOL</i>	<i>Mr. Brian Brindley</i>
Closing Remarks	<i>Council Members, Mr. Tom Brady, Honorable Mr. Will Bushman</i>

List of Participants

Attendees	Representing
Dr. Arrington, Jeff	DoDEA, Pacific West District Superintendent
Ms. Balocki, Marie	Commandant of the Marine Corps
Ms. Barnes, Tomeshia	DoDEA, Student Services
COL Barrett, Sean G.	Commander, U.S. Forces Japan
Lt Gen Basham, Steven	Commander, U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa
Dr. Beland, Russ	Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Mr. Brady, Robert	DoDEA, Financial & Business Operations
Mr. Brindley, Brian	DoDEA, Operations, Plans, Legislation & Policy
Mr. Brinkmann, Michael	Commander, U.S. European Command
Mr. Burcham, Jay	DoDEA, Chief of Staff
Mr. Bushman, Will	Performing the Duties of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Mr. Butler, David	DoDEA, Education Projects Specialist
Mr. Cannon, Ed	Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations
Ms. Carawan, Evonne	Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Dr. Cooley, Wendy	DoDEA, Capabilities & Initiatives Division Chief
Mr. Croce, John	Pacific Fleet, Personnel and Family Readiness
Mr. Cunningham, Oliver	Commander, U. S. Forces Korea
Mr. Daniel, Ed	DoDEA, General Counsel
Mr. David, Gerald	DoDEA, Logistics
LtG Evans, Jason T.	Chief of Staff, Department of the Army G-9
Ms. Facon, Kathleen	DoDEA, Partnership and Resources
Ms. Fischer, Keri	Commander, Marine Corps Forces Pacific
Ms. Frye, Stefanie	Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Ms. Ganote, Dianna	Department of the Air Force, Chief of Staff
MG Gayler, William	Commander, United States Africa Command
Mr. Goben, Tom	Commandant of the Marine Corps
Mr. Godfrey, Michael	DoDEA, Operations, Plans, Legislation, & Policy
RADM Gray, Scott C.	U.S. Naval Forces Europe - Africa
Ms. Grice, Jean	DoDEA, Pacific Region DEC Subject Matter Expert
CAPT Harris, Shane	Commander, U.S. Africa Command
Lt Col Harrison, Carina	Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Mr. Hashimoto, Mark	Headquarters, Marine Corps Forces Pacific

Dr. Howard-Brahaney	DoDEA Europe South District, Superintendent
Dr. Kelker, Charles	DoDEA, Europe Chief of Staff
Mr. Kline, Carroll	DoDEA, Teaching and Learning
Mr. Larry, Horace	Department of Air Force, Chief of Staff
Dr. Marshall, Terri	DoDEA, Principal of the Year
MG McKeithen, Timothy	Commander, U. S. Army Pacific
Dr. McMullen, Dell	DoDEA, Europe Director of Student Excellence
Dr. Minor, Judith	DoDEA, Americas Director of Student Excellence
Mr. Noel, Jeffrey	DoDEA, Education Research Accountability and Evaluation
Ms. Nolta, Christy	Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
Mr. O'Gara, Frank	DoDEA, Communications and Public Affairs
Mr. Patterson, Mark	DoDEA, Chief, Information Operations Division
Ms. Penrod, Virginia	Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
Ms. Phillips, Mary	Department of the Air Force, Chief of Staff
LTC Pigg, Nanette	IMCOM Army Schools Program Manager
Ms. Rapp, Lois	DoDEA, Pacific Director of Student Excellence
Dr. Rimpola, Raquel	DoDEA, Assessment
Ms. Sakai, Jennifer	Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Dr. Schiavino-Narvez, Beth	DoDEA, Chief Academic Officer
Mr. Schlitz, Todd	DoDEA, Pacific Chief of Staff
Ms. Shaw, Claudia	DoDEA, Chief, Resource Management Division
Ms. Simpson, Lynn	Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
MG Smith, Tammy	Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Lt Gen Thomas, Jon	Commander, Pacific Air Forces
Ms. Traugott, Christine	Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
Maj Gen Williams, Stephen	Commander, U. S. Forces Korea
CAPT Yatko, Lyn	USINDOPACOM J1