

SYNCHED

Connecting Parents, Teachers, and Community

Winter 2011



dodea

Virtual School

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Trip to the “Library” Becomes a Reality for DVHS Students

No high school in the United States would be complete without a library and DoDEA’s Virtual High School is no exception.

The DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS) will open its own Library Information Center offering eBooks and online databases in the spring of 2011 when pilot testing of the library resources will take place. Additional resources and services will follow throughout the 2011-2012 school year.

“The Library Information Center will be a fully-functioning, online library providing digital resources that virtual school students may access from any geographic location,” said Carla Southers, DoDEA Information Center Coordinator.

The initial library collection will be populated with non-fiction eBook titles and curriculum reference materials selected specifically to support DVHS curriculum and instruction.

Similar to other DoDEA school library information centers, the DVHS Library will provide electronic editions of magazines, newspapers, and reference books addressing a wide range of research and curricular needs.

Teachers can use these materials when planning instruction and students may use them to supplement their learning or pursue further interests within the content area they are studying. Only DVHS students are authorized to use the DVHS library due to product licensing and subscription requirements.

“Creating a DoDEA Virtual School Library Information Center strengthens the educational quality of the virtual school by digitally delivering, the same curricular resources and access to information materials that students in traditional schools receive” Southers said.



DoDEA Mission: To Provide an Exemplary Education that Inspires and Prepares All DoDEA Students for Success in a Dynamic, Global Environment.

V Virtual
AND VERSATILE

I Interactive,
INTEGRATED, AND INDIVIDUALIZED
INSTRUCTION THAT IS

R Relevant
AND REALISTIC; FOCUSED ON

T Twenty-first
CENTURY SKILLS WITH

U Useful feedback
THROUGH A BALANCE OF

A Assessments
ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE
TO DEVELOP

L Life-Long
LEARNERS

Virtual High School

Vision:

To prepare our students to live, learn, work, and serve the public good in a digital, global society through engaging, synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

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Accessing the E-Book collection requires only a web-browser on an Internet connection.

Students will not need to purchase an e-book reader device. Additional information regarding how to access the new E-Book resources will be provided to students in their individual courses.

Students are encouraged to “take a trip to the library” this semester to pursue their personal interests and improve their background knowledge of the content areas they are studying.

What's an e-book?

An electronic book, E-book is a text and image-based publication in digital form produced on, published by, and readable on computers or other digital devices.



“The DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS) will open its own Library Information Center offering eBooks and online databases in the spring of 2011 when pilot testing of the library resources will take place.”

Meet the Principal



From the Principal's Desk

Being the principal of any high school has its challenges and rewards but being the principal of a virtual high school has some unique characteristics. Terri Marshall, the Principal of DoDEA's Virtual High School knows this well.

"I don't have the opportunity to see students on a daily basis or have the same level of interaction as a school," said Marshall but she added that she is able to "walk through a class" at anytime even though the teacher may not be on-line.

"And even though it's a virtual school, I still deal with the same academic and social challenges students deal with as a face-to-face institution," she said.

When DoDEA began developing its Virtual High School, Marshall was excited to be offered the opportunity to be the school's first principal.

"I know that virtual learning is going to be a part of all of our lives. It opens up access and opportunities for our students and for all of us," Marshall said. "As an educator I always want to be in the forefront of finding new ways to empower and challenge our students. Being the Principal of the Virtual High School allows me to do just that."

Marshall has worked for DoDEA since August 1994, when she served as a mathematics teacher in Wiesbaden, Germany. She was an assistant Principal in Seoul, Korea and the Principal of Hanau High School in Hanau, Germany and at Lakenheath Middle School, in Lakenheath England.

Looking forward, Marshall said she and her staff will continue to "fill in the gaps" i.e. provide access and opportunities to students attending DoDEA schools as well as to students in the NonDoD School Program (NDSP).

"In the future, we would like to provide on-line content that DoDEA teachers can use in the brick and mortar schools," she said. "Research shows that students do better in a blended learning environment. It allows teachers to individualize the educational process for the learner"

One of the challenges Marshall said teachers face is the inability to actually see students. "Because teachers can not read body language, students must be able to communicate both orally and in writing," Marshall said. "Students must take ownership of their learning process and development. Students must be able to work independently as well as on a team."



**Terri Marshall, Principal
DoDEA Virtual High School**

Marshall said on-line learning provides opportunities for students to communicate and collaborate across schools and time zones.

"Online learning also helps develop time management skills, nurtures self-directed learners and cultivates the student's ability to work independently," she said.

Marshall emphasized that parents are the student's first teacher and that they play an integral role in the educational process of their children.

"Students are more successful in school when parents support and encourage their child and are actively involved in their learning," said Marshall. "And that's true for any child in any school."



Counseling Corner



From the Counselor's Desk

- Now that the spring semester is underway, Virtual School staff is busily planning for SY 11-12. Information regarding course offerings will be going out to local schools in the next few weeks. Here are some helpful hints to help students incorporate online coursework into their plans. Our goal is to make the course request process as user-friendly and as smooth as possible. As a reminder, however, students should always have a backup plan just in case their first choice may not be available.
- Taking an online course may be the answer if you are interested in taking a course that is not offered locally or if you have schedule conflict. See your local school counselor for more information regarding how to request virtual high school course selections.
- Keep in mind that courses taken at the Virtual High School are just as rigorous as traditional brick-and-mortar building-level courses. In addition, Advanced Placement (AP) courses have more stringent requirements identical to what you would find in AP courses at your local school. Since an AP course is equivalent to a college level course, there is an expectation of a higher level of commitment.
- To be successful in online courses, an ideal student possesses good time management skills, is self-directed, advocates for his/her own personal learning, and seeks assistance from virtual school teachers and online facilitators if needed. As with any course it is important to make sure that all assignments are completed according to course deadlines. Parents can support by checking student progress with their student and with the virtual school teachers.
- Taking courses at the Virtual High School is a wonderful option to consider. College admission officers are impressed by a program of studies that is strong, relevant and rigorous. With our wide range of course offerings, students can often take courses that may not be available in their local school or with courses that conflict with courses students may want to take.
- Within the next few months, look for additional counseling resources on the Virtual High School website that address academic, career, and personal-social issues that students face as they navigate through the high school experience.
- I look forward to working with students, and parents and am available to assist local schools with the delivery of a comprehensive array of counseling services. Contact me at anytime with questions you have about the counseling services our online school provides.



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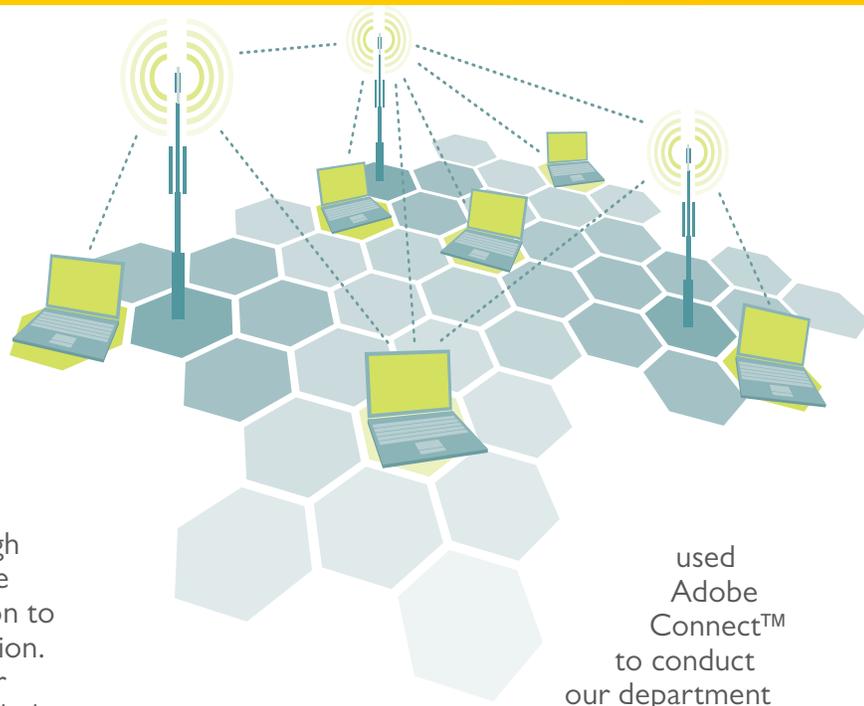
Hub-to-Hub America, Europe and the Pacific

How do you work together as one school when you are physically located in three different geographic areas and three different time zones? The DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS) staff utilizes many of the same resources used for teacher-student interaction to personalize learning and differentiate instruction. Communication and collaboration among our staff members is vital. Whether in the same hub or working across hubs, a strong sense of shared purpose is the framework that holds together this purposeful learning community.

The three hubs are located in Arlington/Quantico, Virginia (America hub), Wiesbaden, Germany (Europe hub) and Camp Humphreys, Korea (Pacific Hub). An administrator, teachers, and technical staff are located at each hub. Teachers at each hub serve students world-wide as well as provide same time zone instructional support for students.

In addition to telephone, email and instant messaging, DVHS staff also use a shared electronic forum housed in the learning management system used by staff and students. This Virtual School Staff electronic forum provides for collaborative wikis, discussion boards, shared documents and announcements. DVHS also uses a Video Teleconferencing (VTC) system for real time video meetings. Faculty meetings are also via VTC. One of the challenges is setting a time that is realistic for all three hubs. This means that faculty meetings take place very early in the morning for the America hub, mid-day for the Europe hub, and in the evening for the Pacific hub. This time zone accommodation is part of the flexibility required of DVHS staff.

We use Adobe Connect™ as a web conferencing tool to conduct small meetings. Earlier this year, we



used Adobe Connect™ to conduct our department meetings across all three hubs. “It felt like a regular brick and mortar department meeting with a sharing of ideas and hashing out the nuts and bolts” says Rose Timbrell, AP German teacher describing the Foreign Language Department meeting. Humanities teacher Wanda McCollar likes the way the Social Studies Department used instant messaging conferencing for their last department meeting and says “it worked perfectly”. Virtual School staff exhibits this type of collective efficacy when they describe their collaborations.

The flexibility of the DVHS staff is also evident in the integration of “real time” interaction with DVHS students. DVHS teachers are using the same web conferencing technology with students to conduct tutoring sessions, peer collaboration and course assessments.

The DoDEA Virtual High School will continue to utilize technological resources that support communication and collaboration of its staff across hubs and time zones. Moreover, these technological innovations not only connect us as a staff, but they allow us to impact student learning by establishing and fostering school-home-community partnerships.



Meet the Staff

There are many talented, dedicated people involved in the development and operation of DoDEA's virtual school. We thought you might like to meet some of them! Each issue will feature some of the staff from all areas of the globe who work to make sure our students have access to a quality learning environment and classes that inspire, engage and challenge.



Pat Boué

AP Teacher

European Hub, Wiesbaden, Germany

We live in the 21st Century and I work in a 21st Century learning environment. It's a great place to be.

I teach AP US History and AP US Government & Politics. I am also the Co-chair for the DVHS Continuous School Improvement (CSI)

team. Additionally, I was elected by my colleagues to serve as the current Union representative for all three Hubs.

I am so proud to be a part of the DoDEA Virtual High School. It was exciting to go through the accreditation process last spring and to be validated as our own school. We are continuing to grow and expand our offerings. While there are growing pains, the DVHS is on the move and it's exciting to be a part of that dynamic.

My family I count as my greatest success and greatest blessing. In my spare time, I love dabbling in interior design and writing. My husband and I are restoring an old German villa built in the late 1800s and a little shotgun house built in the early 1900s in the heart of the New Orleans Garden District. I am also working on writing books.



Rosewitha Timbrell

AP German Teacher

Americas Hub, Quantico, VA USA

As a former DoDDS student myself, I am delighted to have this wonderful opportunity to return to the DoDDS community and work with military dependent kids and their specific needs and interests. I have been the Advanced Placement German teacher for the Distance Learning Program and the Virtual High School for 8 years. Prior to this, I taught high school and university level German, Humanities, and English in Florida and Pennsylvania.

I serve as Co-Chair of the CSI and Accreditation team for the Virtual High School. Last year, when we got our accreditation, it was the fulfillment of a long-sought after dream by many of us in the Virtual High School. Our Virtual High School has a creative, dynamic staff and it is an honor to be part of such a team.

Technology and virtual education are here now and are the wave of the future, and I believe that giving our students an opportunity to learn within this environment gives them a tremendous advantage. The consistently high scores that our students earn on Advanced Placement tests underscore the talent and commitment of our students and the strength of our program.

Edwina Smith



Assistant Principal Pacific Hub , Camp Humphreys, Korea

As an instructional leader, I am passionate about student achievement and creating educational and career opportunities for our students to compete in our global society. As educators, it is our challenge and obligation to ensure that young people are adequately prepared for higher education or to go directly into the workforce.

The Virtual School Program is an extension of the traditional school and helps to provide the 21st century student with skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful and productive citizen. The Virtual School Program is independent of time and place. It provides flexibility and other alternatives for students who for some reason cannot physically attend a traditional classroom.

As an assistant principal of the Virtual High School, I will interface with the school counselors and each online facilitator in the Pacific (Korea, Japan, Okinawa, and Guam). I also communicate with parents, students and the school to ensure that students in the Virtual School have a successful learning experience.

My hope is that the 21st century student takes advantage of every opportunity to further him/her education. The opportunities are unlimited.

As an instructional leader, my goal is to promote the highest student achievement as well as develop long-life learners and responsible citizens. It is through our partnership with parents, students and the community, we can accomplish this goal. We look forward to working with students, parents and school during the school year.



Joseph Lauzon

Teacher

Pacific Hub, Camp Humphreys, Korea

I believe the Virtual School environment is where the future of education is headed and it fills needs that schools can't provide for their students.

I teach and develop the Mandarin Chinese course.

I am looking forward to creating a top quality course that students will benefit a lot from and enjoy using.



Meet the Staff