

SYNCHED

Connecting Parents, Teachers, and Community



DoDEA Launching Virtual High School

DoDEA has a proud, 60-year history of providing quality education for children of military families, the majority of which has been taught in traditional “brick and mortar” classrooms. As an organization dedicated to continually improving the education experience for our students, DoDEA is currently developing additional academic opportunities through the use of 21st Century learning and communication tools.

“We are in the process of developing a fully-accredited Virtual High School,” said Patricia Riley, Chief of DoDEA Distance Learning/Virtual School. “This doesn’t mean we would expect students to attend the Virtual School from 9th through 12th grade, necessarily, but the Virtual High School will increase education options for DoDEA-eligible students.”

Although DoDEA has offered distance-learning courses since the early 1980s, the Virtual School will eventually offer a complete curriculum of courses necessary for a student to graduate from high school.

“This is our transition year,” said Riley. “The true launch of the Virtual High School will occur in the 2010-2011 school year. Right now we’re focusing on transitioning our distance learning program into a fully accredited comprehensive virtual high school.”

Overseas, the Virtual High School will use the same criteria for eligibility as DoDEA schools. Eligibility is determined through categories (see sidebar). In the continental U.S., eligibility requirements will also be the same as they are for enrollment in the DoDEA schools on military installations. According to Riley, the criteria for students located in the U.S. territories is still being clarified.

The Virtual High School will assist transitioning DoDEA students by allowing them to take classes they need regardless of their location and enhance curriculum by providing additional resources to fill gaps, assist in transition and provide flexibility in scheduling.

Riley explained that the Virtual High School is not going to replace or compete with face-to-face instruction. “If a course is offered at a local DoDEA school, a student will be required to attend that course unless there is a schedule conflict. They

dodea Virtual School

Contents:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| About the virtual school | 1 |
| Counseling Corner | 4 |
| Meet the Staff | 5 |
| Technical Requirements | 7 |

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wouldn't have the option of taking the class virtually if they can get the same course in a traditional classroom," Riley added.

There will be 33 new courses available by the official start of the program in the fall of 2010. In addition, the Virtual High School will continue to provide courses to supplement DoDEA school offerings such as Advanced Placement courses.

"Another important distinction is that DoDEA will own the content of these courses," Riley said. "Which means the content will be the same whether you're in a DoDEA traditional classroom or you're taking the class on-line."

"So if a student was taking a course in a DoDEA school and had to leave mid-semester and move to another DoDEA school where the course wasn't offered, the student could pick up where he or she left off through the virtual class."

There will be three hubs for the Virtual High School to accommodate the three

different areas of the world that the school will serve. The first hub has already been established in Wiesbaden, Germany. The second will be in Korea at Camp Humphries. The third hub will be at an as yet undetermined location within the continental U.S.

"These locations – within the different time zones – will allow for synchronous learning," said Riley.

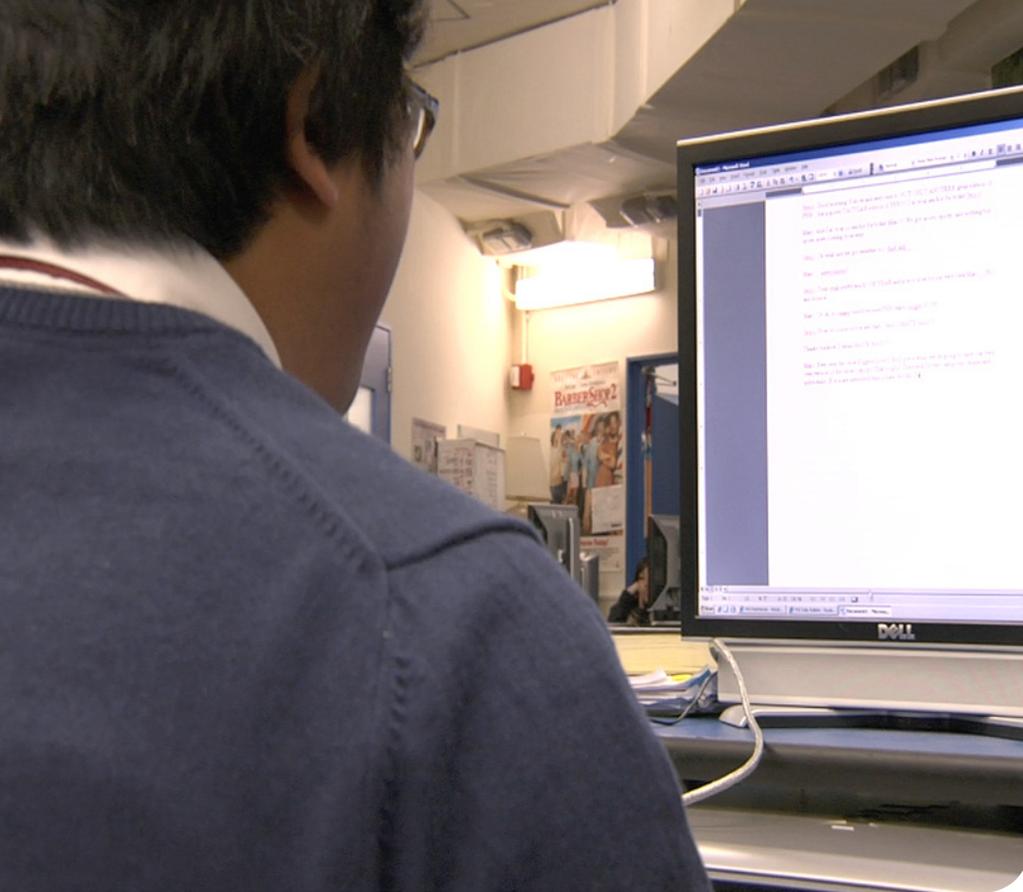
While some learning will be able to take place any time the student chooses (reading, research, etc.) some of the requirements will be to participate in live, on-line discussions and video or audio chats. Although the use of synchronous support is not new to DoDEA's distance learning program, new and improved web-conferencing

tools will enhance online instruction and provide students and teachers with opportunities to interact via the Internet.

"We're preparing our students for life in the 21st century," said Riley. "So offering them opportunities to learn in ways that utilize technology just makes sense. It's an exciting time for DoDEA whether you're an educator, a parent of a student."



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“DoDEA will own the content of all courses being taught. The content will mirror what is taught in the traditional DoDEA Classroom.”



Categories of Eligibility for Attendance in DoDEA Schools

Category 1

- **(Command Sponsored)** A student is the dependent of a service member or DoD civilian and is on the official orders. Space-required, tuition-free.
- **(FMS or MAP)** A student is the dependent of a person who is either in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) or the Military Assistance Program (MAP). Space- required, tuition-paying.

- **(DoD Contractor)** A student is the dependent of a DoD Contractor. Space-created, tuition paying.

Category 2

- **(Federally Connected)** A student is the dependent of a person who is a non-DoD, U.S. Government Agency Employee. Space-available, tuition-paying.

Category 3

- **(Non-Command Sponsored)** A student is the dependent of a service member or DoD civilian and in not on official orders. Space-available, tuition-free.

Category 4

- **(Non-Federally Connected)** A student is the dependent of a person who is not in any of the above categories. Space-available, tuition-paying.

Counseling Corner



DoDEA is pleased to make available to its students, a virtual school counseling department. Just as in a traditional brick-and-mortar school building, the virtual school counseling department will offer the same type of services but through a virtual environment. The counseling department will offer a comprehensive developmentally appropriate guidance and counseling program designed to meet the needs of all students the school serves.

The mission of DoDEA's school counseling program is to provide a program that addresses the academic, career and personal/social development of all students. Our school counselor is a professional advocate for students and is one who is trained to provide support to maximize each student's potential and academic achievement. Through partnerships with other educators, parents, guardians and the community at-large, DoDEA school counselors facilitate the support system to ensure that all students have access to and are prepared with the knowledge and skills to contribute at the highest level as productive members of society in the 21st century.

The School Counseling (Guidance) Program has three broad developmental areas that include standards and competencies as mandated by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). These standards promote behaviors that enhance learning for all students. The three interrelated domains of student development are: Academic, Career, and Personal/Social domains. There are a myriad of activities that the school counseling program will offer fully beginning with the 2010-2011 school year:

“ In a fast paced technological era, I am looking forward to developing a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the needs of all the students who take courses through distance learning. ”



Every issue of (insert name of newsletter) will offer a Counseling Corner feature and more information on the school's offerings will be made available to students interested in enrolling through several modes: Quarterly Newsletter, web site, Blackboard, and through the School Counseling (Guidance) Departments at DoDEA schools in the various hubs.

If you have information regarding opportunities available through the Virtual School, please contact:

Dr. Willie Stroble
Professional School Counselor,
DoDEA Headquarters
(Arlington, Virginia)
(703) 588-3613
DSN- 94-426-3613
Willie.Stroble@hq.dodea.edu

Academic

Students will receive guidance to acquire the academic preparation essential to choose from a variety of educational, training, and employment options upon completion of secondary school. Virtual school counseling will be available to assist students in choosing the appropriate course of study that leads to high school completion, and ultimately to receiving a high school diploma upon graduation..

Career

College representatives and military recruiters, through webcast and webinar sessions, will visit the virtual school on a regular basis to provide information about college and military opportunities.

Personal/Social

Students enrolled in the virtual school will acquire an understanding of, and respect for, self and others, and the skills to be responsible citizens. Through virtual conferences and virtual classroom guidance lessons, student will understand the relationship among, and importance of respecting rules, laws, safety, and the protection of individual rights; understand when and how to utilize family, peer, school, and/or community resources; understand how to use appropriate communication and conflict resolution skills with peers and adults; and understand how to apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices.



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.



Rick Southard

**Computer Science Instructor
Pacific Hub, Camp Humphreys, Korea**

I wanted to teach Computer Science and most DoDEA schools are too small to have a true Computer Science program. The virtual school will allow for more flexibility and offer more choices because it has a broader audience.

I teach Advanced Placement Computer Science and Java Programming.

I'm looking forward to watching the virtual school grow and be able to provide any course that a student might need no matter where they are located.

Congress has declared the week of December 7th as National Computer Science Education Week. I look forward to seeing more students take a Computer Science course in Middle school and High School.

Dr. Willie Stroble, Jr.

**Professional School Counselor
DoDEA Headquarters**



I have chosen to work in the Virtual School environment because of the unique challenges and opportunities this experience provides. Having worked in traditional educational settings (PK-12 and at the university level) my entire career, I have always had the unique opportunity to work with students in traditional face-to-face environments. Now, to have the opportunity to work with students in a virtual school environment, for me, is extremely exciting. I am humbled to be a part of this endeavor. The opportunities to make a difference in the lives of young people are infinite, and I am so appreciative to have been given this opportunity to be of service to DoDEA and to the Virtual School in this capacity.

I will serve as the school counselor providing academic support, career information, and personal/social assistance and guidance to the students the school will ultimately serve.

In a fast paced technological era, I am looking forward to developing a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the needs of all the students who take courses through distance learning. To accomplish this mission, we, as a school, will have to be creative in the delivery of the traditional counseling services. I am excited about having the opportunity to impact on the school, its mission, and its students. I am anxiously looking forward to meeting and working with my fellow colleagues in the field, parents, but most importantly, my students around the world.

As a life-long learner myself, I hope to inspire my students to have a continuous passion for learning, to establish realistic goals worthy of pursuing, and to work diligently to accomplish those clearly defined goals. With nearly 30 years in the education profession and as a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, I have worked in the education field at the school building, central office, state department of education, and university levels. I bring a unique zest for helping others, working as a team player, and inspiring others to "dare to dream" in enormous ways. I am delighted to have become a member of the DoDEA school family.



Jo Brooks

**Teacher, AP Calculus AB and BC
Fort Rucker, AL**

It is a challenge to learn how to teach from a distance and exciting to continually learn ways to enhance the learning experience for the students through the use of technology.

Also, I enjoy getting to know my students even though they are at a distance and I rarely get to meet them face to face. I teach two levels of AP Calculus, AB and BC. I am also the union FRS for the distance learning teachers.

I am looking forward to once again being able to expand the school to make it available to more students in more places, and also to be able to more readily share our materials with all teachers in DoDEA to enhance the education of their students too.

I have been with the distance learning school for DoDEA for 16 years and it continues to be an exciting and challenging environment in which to teach. I love it!

Hilario (Larry) Chavez

**Special Education Instructor (All Areas of Need)
Europe - Wiesbaden, Germany**

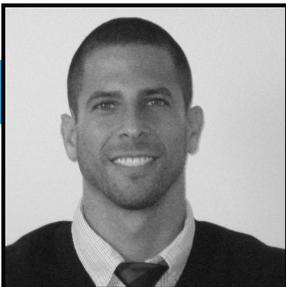


Working within a virtual school environment allows students to gain the skills in using technologies that will be useful for them in the 21st century – building for the future!

I will be working jointly with instructors to modify curriculum for online learning courses. We will also be following any modifications or accommodations that the student requires to be successful.

It's exciting that we are able to provide options for diverse learners to have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, and experience an alternate learning environment. I want to extend to you and your family my warmest welcome to our online School.

As we (Virtual School) grow, we will provide alternative opportunities to express ideas, responses, and solutions in many new and exciting classes.



Phil Abi-Najm

**Learning Management System (LMS) Administrator
DoDEA Headquarters**

Working with education staff and learners in the DoDEA Virtual School has allowed me to blend my existing technical skill sets while cultivating a knowledge and practice of educational pedagogies in a unique global learning environment.

Coming from an IT background, I believe the expertise I offer is critical to the success of the virtual school by providing direction for the effective integration of instructional technologies.



Meet the Staff

If you have questions or need additional information about technical requirements, please contact.....



Technical Requirements

Most students of the (insert school name) will participate in the virtual school program from a classroom setting at their local school but some students who are in remote locations will participate from home. In addition, some course work may be required outside of the allotted class time for all students, so a student may need computer access outside of the local school.

To the right you'll find a list of technical requirements necessary for participating in classes at (insert school name).

Students will access (insert school name) through a program called Blackboard which requires only a web browser with Javascript and cookies enabled. Most computers with internet access will have these capabilities.

Additional browser plug-ins may be needed to display rich content. Some of the most common are Microsoft Office applications or viewers, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Adobe Flash Player and Apple Quicktime. Types of plug-ins required will vary based on the types of file being uploaded by the Instructor/Leader or shared by participants.



Minimum System Recommendations:

- Windows 2000, XP, or Vista
- Mac OS X
- 512 MB RAM, 1GB of free hard disk space
- 800 MHz processor or better
- 56K modem or better
- XGA (1024x768) capable monitor

Recommended Browsers:

- Mozilla Firefox 3.x and above (for both PC and Mac)
- Internet Explorer 6.x and above (for PC only)
- Safari 3.x and above (for Mac)

Recommended Browser Plug-ins and Applications:

- Sun Java Run-time Environment (JRE) 1.6 or later
- Apple Quicktime 7.0 or later
- Adobe Flash Player 10 or later
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 7.x or later

Required browser settings:

- Enable JavaScript
- Accept all Cookies

Blackboard supports the following types of files:

- Word documents (doc)
- PowerPoint presentations (ppt)
- Excel Spreadsheets (xls)
- Image files (jpg, bmp, gif, tiff, png)
- Media files (mpg, avi, wma, mp3)
- Zip files (zip)
- QuickTime (mov)
- Adobe Flash (swf)

