

Back to School Changes

Students headed back to school this fall in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools should prepare for changes both inside and outside the classroom.

Area Directors in Europe and the Pacific have swapped places for the 2009-2010 school year. Ms. Diana Ohman, former Director of DoDEA schools in Europe, is now the new Director of DoDEA schools in the Pacific; while Dr. Nancy Bresell, former Director of DoDEA's schools in the Pacific, is now the new Director of DoDEA schools in Europe. The change will be advantageous to the schools in each area by allowing a different leadership perspective.

Inside the classroom, several changes are being implemented at the Kindergarten level. One new rule, which went into effect July 2009, requires that students reach the pre-established age by Sept. 1 to enroll in a DoDEA school. Students must be 4 years old to enroll in pre-kindergarten or the Defense Department's Sure Start program. Kindergartners must be 5, and first graders, 6. Under current rules, children have to reach the above ages by Oct. 31.

DoDEA made the change after research showed that 36 states require kindergartners to be 5 by Sept. 1 or earlier, Marc Mossburg, chief of curriculum for DoDEA, said.

DoDEA's decision to implement the change also was, in part, an effort to ease the transition of students who start in a defense school, but then transfer to a public school, Mossburg said. "We wanted to make sure that our kids, if they go to kindergarten and they transfer to a first grade in the States, that they are ready to enter that first grade," he said.

Consequently, students who have completed a year at an accredited

kindergarten and then transfer to a DoDEA school can enroll in first grade regardless of whether they meet the age requirement, Mossburg said.

DoDEA is also working to reduce the Kindergarten Program Pupil-to-Teacher (PTR) ratio to 18:1 from the current standard of 29:1. The new PTR will be implemented in 19 schools that were identified as some of the locations having the highest Kindergarten enrollments for School Year 2009-2010 and where principals have indicated they have the facilities to accommodate this ratio. This initiative will mean the addition of 19 teachers and 19 full-time educational aides for this school year. As additional facilities become available to support smaller classrooms, more Kindergarten classes will be added.

Visit www.dodea.edu for more information regarding additional changes. Parents can also access information such as school locations, addresses, school contact information, school calendars, immunization and registration requirements, curriculum guides, and school lunch programs.

OMSG Offers Online Showrooms

The Overseas Military Sales Group (OMSG), which has served the overseas military community for more than four decades as its largest retailer of automobiles and motorcycles, has really gone global—using the World Wide Web for its showroom.

OMSG is authorized to sell under the AAFES/NEXCOM-Exchange New Car Sales Program (ENCSP) and operates in more than 100 offices in 30 countries.

Marketing to today's military can prove to be difficult: service members are scattered across the globe



U.S. Naval Academy swim coach Michael Wender conducts diving instruction during a week-long swim camp at Naval Station Rota, Spain, July 31, 2009. More than 30 swimmers from Rota and military communities across Europe spent two-to-five hours a day in the pool, interspersed with workshops that touched on subjects such as nutrition, goal-setting, training and strategy. Photo by Jan Hammond, NAVSTA ROTA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

in remote locations, and don't necessarily return to military installations. The showroom at the NEX or AAFES just wasn't enough anymore. Online marketing and digital kiosks were implemented to work in conjunction with face-to-face sales. Given that the Navy wasn't conducive to having showrooms on ships, the newer technologies have had a positive effect.

Traditionally, OMSG has served as the on-base, factory-authorized distributor for vehicles to military personnel stationed, or on TDY assignment, abroad for at least 30 days. To order any vehicle, you need a copy of your orders to prove your time overseas. And you must place your order before you head back to the continental U.S.

OMSG was founded out of necessity, as returning soldiers didn't have a residence and dealers wouldn't sell to them. But it has become the largest retailer to military personnel because it continues to offer one heck of a deal. Their no-hassle pricing is backed with a 100 percent price protection and a lowest price guarantee. If you get a bona fide lower price on the same vehicle with same options for the same delivery date from a dealer in the U.S., the Military Advantage Program will pay the difference. And you get up to two weeks after delivery to file your claim. Visit www.ensc.com for more information on this program. ●