



Overseas School Options

By Bennett Leigh



Choices for parents taking their children overseas vary from U.S. State Department schools to homeschooling, and even local schools, if desired. But it's important to understand your responsibilities in your host country, and any special requirements you may need to meet.

Most American students overseas attend one of the many DoD or State Department schools in countries all around the world. These schools typically have a curriculum similar to U.S. college preparatory schools, but also offer courses in their host country's language and/or history. The American School in Japan offers Advanced Placement courses to its students, and offers a two-semester school year similar to that found in most U.S. schools. For more information about State Department Schools, including their locations in the Pacific Rim, visit

www.state.gov/m/a/os/c1685.htm.

The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) provides support and funding for the education of eligible depend-

ents of sponsors assigned at locations where the DoD does not operate a school within commuting distance. Enrollment eligibility for dependents of DoD personnel assigned to an overseas area is governed by the provisions of DoDEA Directive 1342.13, "Eligibility Requirements for Education of Minor Dependents in Overseas Areas," September 20, 2006.

The total cost of tuition and transportation funded by DoDEA for enrollment in a non-DoD school will not normally exceed the United States Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) education allowance for a particular location. Rates are posted at www.state.gov/rates/edu_all.asp

Sponsors MUST obtain approval for tuition and other expenses from the appropriate DoDEA Area office prior to incurring any expense. Payments for tuition and certain other expenses are approved by the NDSP Area manager for the eligible dependents of DoD personnel who must attend a non-DoD school.

Perhaps the most important step you can take when registering at any school is to hand-carry your child's shot records and transcripts with you while on the move. Forgetting these or having them stuck on a late shipment can slow down the enrollment process significantly.

For families wishing to homeschool while overseas, the chief benefit of command sponsorship is relief from



the requirement to follow host nation school attendance laws.

Command-sponsored families have a SOFA stamp in each person's passport. 'Individually-sponsored' or 'non-command sponsored' family members will not because they will have tourist passports instead of government issued no-fee passports. This difference means that technically the children of non-command sponsored families who live in countries where home-schooling is illegal are required to attend school whether that is a DoD dependent school, a host nation school or a private school.

Command sponsorship can be obtained after arriving in-country but there may be restrictions depending on the host nation or on dependent levels in-country. For example, the Navy has restricted the command sponsorship of large families in Japan.

Command-sponsored dependent levels are restricted overseas. School availability, housing availability and the possibility of the resources for the evacuation of non-combatants in case of hostilities or natural disaster are some of the reasons for the restrictions.

Although military families assigned to Guam are 'over the sea,' they are not homeschooling in a foreign country. Because of the commonwealth's or territory's relationship with the United States the education laws of these 'overseas-but-not-foreign' assignments apply to military homeschoolers.

Similarly, military family members accompanying a sponsor who is stationed in Hawaii are not considered to be overseas for educational purposes; state laws apply. For more information on home-schooling your child while overseas, visit

http://home.kc.rr.com/milhm-schlhq/military_DoDEA.htm ●

Checklists for Transferring Students

Sending School Checklist

- Course Description Book
- School Profile
- Attendance and Tardy Records
- Report Card
- Current Schedule
- Withdrawal Grades
- Transcript/Course History (with grading system)
- Class Rank
- Cumulative Folder
- Testing Information - Standardized Test
- Scores, End of Course Test Scores, Competency Test Scores
- Health Records (including shot records)
- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Number
- Activities Record (such as co/extracurricular)
- IEP/504/Gifted Records
- JROTC Records
- Guardianship/custody papers
- Fees Owed
- Alternative Schools Records
- Letters of Recommendations (especially for senior students)
- Writing Samples (if available)
- At-Risk or Action Plans for classroom modifications (if available)
- Portfolios (if available)
- Accelerated Reader Points (if available)
- Service Learning Hours (if available)

Receiving School Checklist

- Course Description Book
- School Profile
- Attendance and Tardy Records
- Report Card Current Schedule
- Withdrawal Grades
- Transcript/Course History (with grading system, and class rank)
- Cumulative Folder
- Testing Information - Standardized Test
- Scores, End of Course Test Scores, Competency Test Scores
- Health Records (including shot records and birth certificate)
- Social Security Number
- Activities Record (such as co/extracurricular)
- IEP/504/Gifted Records
- JROTC Records
- Guardianship/custody Papers
- Fees Owed
- Alternative Schools Records
- Letters of Recommendations (especially for senior students)
- Writing Samples (if available)
- At-Risk or Action Plans for classroom modifications (if available)
- Portfolios (if available)
- Accelerated Reader Points (if available)
- Service Learning Hours (if available)
- Proof of Residency/Military Orders

Checklists courtesy Military Child Education Coalition, www.militarychild.org