



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
EDUCATION ACTIVITY  
4040 NORTH FAIRFAX DRIVE  
ARLINGTON, VA 22203-1635

MAY 6 2011

Dear DoDEA Teachers, Parents, and Community Members:

As we journey further into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are seeing dramatic changes in how students communicate, interact, and learn. In DoDEA, we believe that schools of the future must be flexible and adaptable, allowing us to adjust to new and innovative ways in how we deliver instruction and meet the needs of all students.

As such, DoDEA has embarked upon a process to best define 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools which takes into consideration innovation in education, curriculum delivery, use of technology, and the growing expectations for sustainability and energy conservation. We are seeking ideas from students, teachers, parents, and other community members to help us shape school facilities that will support 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning requirements. Between now and the end of the school year, we invite your participation and welcome your ideas.

In January of 2011, President Obama released a report (*Strengthening our Military Families*) that identified one of his key areas as education. In support of this focus, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has placed a high priority on excellence in our military children's education and development. Complementing this initiative, the Department of Defense has committed to an ambitious military construction program that will build or significantly renovate over 100 DoDEA schools at a projected cost of \$3.7B. From now until 2016, this modernization initiative will replace an aging inventory of facilities with state-of-the-art schools to support dependent education for the next 45 years. This is an ideal time to refine our school design standards to ensure they are aligned to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners.

Toward that end, we have endorsed a series of milestones to update our educational facility specifications. The initiative entitled, *Facilities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*, is a 3-part process. Phase 1 sought and captured expertise from industry, educational leaders, and futurists. Phase 2 will focus on generating ideas and input from our customers: students, teachers, parents, and communities. Phase 3 will involve a thorough analysis and synthesis of all submitted ideas and input. This process is intended to help DoDEA incorporate creativity into the design process, developing schools that will best support delivery of a world-class education and may serve as a national benchmark for primary and secondary educational schools.

DoDEA principals and teachers worldwide are being encouraged to involve students in the process of shaping schools of the future. We need your input to help us define educational facilities that optimize success for students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Again, the schools that we are building today will be in use for the next 45 years. Knowing your students, your community, and the culture in which you are immersed, what should we consider? What would you highlight as a requirement for a school of the future?

We have established a space on an internal DoDEA website for teacher and student ideas. We also established an external site for parents and community members to share their ideas. On each site, you will find registration information, guiding questions, and the process for submitting ideas electronically. Participating teachers can choose how to incorporate this project into learning standards. It can be completed as a class or in small groups with teachers serving as the facilitator. Submissions can be in the form of videos, images, narratives, sound recordings, or any media with which students are familiar. All student work must be submitted by a teacher using the established intranet site to ensure adult moderation. Further instructions and guidance can be found at: <http://intersect.hq.ds.dodea.edu/community/21stcenturyschools>. On this website you can see what others have submitted.

Parents and community members are invited to share ideas for 21st Century learning using one of the five input opportunities outlined on our external website which can be found at: <http://21stcentury.dodea.edu>.

We look forward to reading your ideas and suggestions, and we encourage you to be imaginative! But remember, the deadline for posting is no later than June 16, 2011. Together we can build a better future and design world-class facilities to help ensure success for all. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,



Marilee Fitzgerald  
Acting Director