

# Support Military Families: Protect DDESS Schools!

- DDESS, the Domestic Dependents Elementary and Secondary Schools, provides an outstanding education to the children of our military men and woman stationed at numerous bases within the continental U.S., as well as Puerto Rico and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. DDESS has been recognized as a model school system for its student achievement – especially among minority students – as well as its levels of parental and community involvement. The schools consistently receive high marks in customer satisfaction surveys; many parents of DDESS students say they remain in the military and choose to live on base so that their children can continue to attend the schools.
- Despite this outstanding reputation and its contributions to military Quality of Life, the DDESS school system finds itself under the threat of dissolution. A Congressional study released in February, 2005, includes recommendations from a “panel of experts” to turn control of many DDESS schools over to the public schools systems in their local communities. These recommendations were based purely on financial considerations and did not take into account the outstanding performance of the schools or their value to military parents. The full DDESS transfer study can be found at [http://www.dodea.edu/ddess/transferStudy\\_0502/](http://www.dodea.edu/ddess/transferStudy_0502/)
- In April, the GAO released a report criticizing the conclusions of the Congressional study. The GAO report calls into question the methodologies and research that were used to justify the recommendations to transfer the schools. Additionally, the GAO report warns against making changes to the DDESS system at a time when tens of thousands of overseas military personnel and their families are soon to be redeployed to the United States. The full GAO report can be found at [www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-469](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-469)
- Congress should act now to voice its support for these schools and let the parents of DDESS students know their excellent schools will not be taken away from them. Military families should not be held in suspense as to the future of their schools. The outstanding quality of education they offer students, as well as the tremendous benefits and retention incentives they provide to parents, make DDESS schools a vital part of military life.

**Show Military Families You Care About Their Quality of Life.  
Voice Your Support for DDESS Schools!**

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