



Special Education Coordinator

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SPECIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Over the next six fiscal years, beginning October 2003, DoDEA will receive \$56.5 million for special education programs as a result of a Program Objective Memorandum (POM) submitted to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The military departments jointly agreed to support the funding. The Special Education Initiative will result in the following enhancements to the special education program.

Staffing: DoDDS Europe received 48 special education positions to establish assessment teams to conduct student evaluations. This allows special education teachers to maximize the instructional time they have with students. Two assessors (a special education assessor and a speech/language assessor) were slated for large school complexes. Special education teachers will still be involved in the assessment process; however, the time spent evaluating students for eligibility will be reduced.

Coordination with Paraprofessionals: Additional hours were funded to increase the workday of special education paraprofessionals to provide time for them to collaborate with special and general education. Paraprofessionals will now work the same days as teachers. Work schedules should reflect that special educators and paraprofessionals have time to collaboratively plan for student instruction. Work schedules will be monitored for both the teacher and paraprofessional to ensure instructional planning is occurring.

Professional Development: Extensive professional development for special education teachers, regular classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, new assessment teams, administrators and parents is planned for the next six years. Special education teachers and paraprofessionals have attended training this school year to review procedural guidance for special education. Staff development for the assessors was conducted on 10 and 11 September 2003.

Materials / Equipment: Curriculum materials for special education are slated with an emphasis on assistive technology, reading, mathematics and functional curriculum materials for students with moderate to severe disabilities. Also, specialized and/or adaptive equipment to support students with physical disabilities are funded. *The purchase of furniture and equipment is only for the first year of the initiative.* Surveys are prepared to see what materials and equipment exist and what is needed based on the DoDEA standards for moderate-severe classrooms and assessment.

2005 and Beyond: Staffing is supported throughout the six years of the initiative and remains a permanent part of our manpower allocation. Professional development focused on curriculum and instruction will have continued emphasis throughout the six years of the initiative. Focus will also be placed on creating a variety of staff development models, monitoring and evaluation.