



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

JUN 20 2011

Dear Fellow School District Leader,

On March 18, 2011, following the catastrophic earthquake and subsequent disasters in Japan, the Department of State issued a Voluntary Authorized Departure for military family members from the island of Honshu, Japan. Throughout the Voluntary Authorized Departure, more than 3,800 students left their Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools and relocated to safe haven locations throughout the world.

As you know, DoDEA requested your support in welcoming the children of military families as they returned to the U.S. Many students successfully temporarily enrolled in stateside schools. Some of these students returned to Japan with their families when the Voluntary Departure was lifted, while some remained in the U.S. to complete their school year at the safe haven location.

It is with deepest gratitude that we express our appreciation to your schools and districts for all you and your staff did to accommodate our students. Although there was uncertainty regarding the duration of their stay, your school leaders and educators provided a welcoming school environment as well as a continuum of education for the displaced students, expertly responding to each child's unique needs. Your actions eased the burdens and offered stability to these military families as they worked to re-establish routines and a sense of normalcy.

On behalf of DoDEA and the military families we serve, we thank you for facilitating a seamless transition for the students affected by this series of disasters. Military Service Members make enormous sacrifices every day for our great nation, and your support assisted in ensuring that the education of their children, their most precious asset, was not among these sacrifices.

Please do not hesitate to ask if there is some way our organization can assist you as you serve the children of our nation's military members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marilee Fitzgerald".

Marilee Fitzgerald
Acting Director