

Balilo is 2010 distinguished principal

Helen Hughes-Balilo, Principal of Wetzel Elementary School in Kaiserslautern, Germany was selected as the Department of Defense Education Activity's nominee for the National Association of Elementary School

Principals' 2010 National Distinguished Principals of the Year for Elementary and Middle Level through the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Hughes-Balilo will be honored as the 2010 DoDEA

National Distinguished Principal on Oct. 14-15, 2010, at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC.

"Under Helen's excellent leadership as principal of Wetzel Elementary School during

the past five years, a complete transformation has occurred that has been keenly focused on student achievement," said Lawanna H. Mangelburg, retiring Kaiserslautern District superintendent. "Helen is committed to success for all students and she places the highest priority on exemplary instructional interventions that are based on individual student academic needs."

Hughes-Balilo has been the principal of Wetzel Elementary since 2005. She served as the assistant principal of Smith Elementary School in Baumholder, Germany prior to her time at Wetzel Elementary and also served as a teacher in schools in Okinawa and Iwakuni Japan. She began her career with DoDEA in 1989 at V.I. Grissom Elementary School at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

The National Distinguished Principals Program was established in 1984 as an annual event to honor exemplary elementary and middle school principals who set the pace, character, and quality of the education children receive during their early school years.

The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of

Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, in corporate partnership with the Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company.

NAESP highlights the fundamental importance of school principals in achieving educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students. The national recognition afforded by the National Distinguished Principal designation instills pride in principals' accomplishments and reinforces their continued leadership in helping students develop a lifelong love of learning.

Hughes-Balilo earned her bachelor's degree from Glenville State College in Glenville, W. Va. and her master of science degree in education from Troy State University in Troy, Ala. in 1996.

"Helen Hughes-Balilo exemplifies the term 'exceptional educational leader,'" said Dorothy Meckes, a first grade teacher at Wetzel Elementary school. "She energizes, engages and encourages the stakeholder in the Wetzel Community to excel and work together. She creates an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect throughout the school and community."



Photo by Dr. Peggy Hoffman-Schmidt

Principal Helen Hughes-Balilo, right, DoDEA Principal of the Year, talks with Kaiserslautern District Teacher of the Year and Wetzel Academic Support Team teacher, Micheline Huntley, about student data as they make plans for the opening of the school year.

Teacher of the Year: 2011 selectee always searching for the right way to teach children

By Dr. Peggy Hoffman-Schmidt
Kaiserslautern District Office

"If children are apparently unable to learn, we should assume that we have not as yet found the right way to teach them." Marie Clay.

"This is my favorite quote," said Micheline Huntley, Academic Support Team teacher at Wetzel Elementary School and the Kaiserslautern District Teacher of the Year selected for 2011. "As a reflective teacher, that's what I feel I constantly do when something doesn't work, I search for the right way to teach the students. That is my way of becoming a better teacher."

Academic Support Team teachers are on the "cutting edge," supporting teachers in the important work they do in ensuring that every child is successful.

They do the work of modeling, coaching, consulting and collaborating, using data to create instructional plans and to

focus on the differentiated needs of all students, all with a focus on research based best practices that will ensure student success. That "can do" attitude and willingness to research and probe, never giving up, has a lot to do with the spirit of the success and culture children experience at Wetzel Elementary School.

Huntley is the fourth teacher at Wetzel to be selected as the Kaiserslautern District Teacher of the Year within the past five years, and most recently, Principal Helen Balilo was selected National Distinguished Principal of the Year for DoDEA.

The culture of learning and belief that all students can learn "when we find the right way to teach them" is the reason for school success. As 2008 Teacher of the Year Shannon O'Dell says about nominating Huntley, "She is a remarkable educator who continues to selflessly dedicate herself to the teaching profes-

sion, for children, parents, and fellow teachers."

Huntley joined the Wetzel staff in 2006 as reading recovery teacher and literacy leader after serving three years at Smith Elementary School as a first grade teacher and reading recovery/literacy leader.

In addition to her teaching commitments, Huntley sponsors after school cooking clubs, homework club, music with moms and dancing with dads activities to provide enrichment opportunities for students and families. This has been crucial in the Baumholder area where the school has supported the families and children through four major deployments. She has been active in the community, serving as the president of the Baumholder Area Education Association, is an active member of the Ramstein Roadrunners Volksmarch Club and is an usher at the Vogelweh Gospel Service. She represents her Alma Mater,

North Carolina A & T State University at the annual Kaiserslautern College Information Night.

Huntley's other DoDDS experience includes being a kindergarten teacher in Okinawa for 16 years. Before joining DoDDS, Huntley taught in North Carolina after earning her degree from North Carolina A & T. She went on to earn two masters degrees at A & T before coming to DoDDS.

When a teacher takes this quote to heart, and does everything in her power to assist colleagues in implementing research based best practices, and guides children so that they become responsible learners reaching for success, you have the dream teacher that every school, parent and child wants and deserves.

Huntley, the Kaiserslautern District's choice as Teacher of the Year for 2011 represents the outstanding teachers of the Kaiserslautern District very well.