

Close Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS)

SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2016-2020	2016-2025
\$583	\$585	\$586	\$593	\$607	\$620	\$633	\$650	\$663	\$675	\$2,954	\$6,195

Heritage Recommendation:

Close the Defense Department's Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary schools (DDESS) on military bases in the continental United States. This proposal saves \$583 million in 2016, and \$6.2 billion over 10 years.

Rationale:

The Pentagon's DDESS currently operates 63 schools on military bases in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The majority of these, 58 schools, are in South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, and North Carolina. These schools were necessary following World War II because, while the military was racially integrated, the school districts in those states were not. That justification has long since disappeared. Today, the dependents of military members in all other states attend local public schools.

Not only are these schools unnecessary, they are inefficient.¹⁹ The Fiscal Commission estimates that the cost per student in FY 2015 will be \$81,000, far higher than the \$11,000 average cost per student in the rest of the country. The department is now rebuilding the schools and plans on opening two new schools in Virginia and North Carolina in FY 2015.²⁰

There is no need for the military to be operating schools in these states and the Pentagon should promptly close the schools and transfer military dependents into the local school systems.

Additional Reading:

- Fiscal Commission, "\$200 Billion in Illustrative Savings [for 2015]," November 12, 2010, http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/Illustrative_List_11.10.2010.pdf.
- Senator Tom Coburn, "Department of Everything," November 2012, http://www.coburn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=Files.Serve&File_id=00783b5a-f0fe-4f80-90d6-019695e52d2d.

Calculations:

Savings are expressed as budget authority based on the FY 2014 estimated spending level as found on page DoDDE-368 of Department of Defense, "Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Estimates Department of Defense Dependents Education (DoDDE)" http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2015/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PART_1/DoDDE_PB15.pdf. Spending levels have been increased at the same rate as discretionary spending for 2016-2025, according to the CBO's most recent August 2014 baseline spending projections.