

**Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller**

**Statement at Press Conference  
for the Pilot Schools of American English in Kyrgyzstan**



**August 20, 2009  
Information Agency “24.kg”**



Good morning. Thank you all for coming today.

It is a great honor for me to sit here with Deputy of the Zhorgoku Kenesh Galina Kulikova, Deputy Minister of Education Umutkan Tynaliev, and esteemed participants of the project, “Pilot Schools of American English in Kyrgyzstan.” I have great hopes that this wonderful project will become a symbol of the partnership between America and Kyrgyzstan, and a strong basis for improving this partnership through mutual understanding.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that our Embassy, in partnership with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and the FORUM English Language Teachers Association, has chosen seven schools to be so called pilot American schools. Like America, Kyrgyzstan has a strong tradition of education and a strong desire to connect with the rest of the world. For that reason Kyrgyzstan was chosen to be the first country in Central Asia with American schools.

We have selected one school in every oblast of Kyrgyzstan to participate. These schools will receive new American English textbooks for every student in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. The book is called “American English File” [HOLD UP BOOK]. It was produced by Oxford University Press according to the latest pedagogical methods, and includes a workbook and multimedia materials. The books are being used by the best schools in countries around the world to learn American English. As you know, American English stands out considerably in its diversity and flexibility in reflecting the realities of today’s changing world.

We are currently holding a two day conference in Bishkek to introduce the project to directors and two teachers from each of these schools, which is why we have director Yuriy Vasiliev from Batken Oblast and teacher Temir Omorov from Jalalabat Oblast here today.

The second key element of this project is a two week intensive training for all of the English teachers at the schools. The trainings will take place at each of the schools, and will include teachers from neighboring schools as well. Altogether, 105 teachers will take part. The trainings will be led by our Embassy's English Language Fellow, Amanda Wetsel, who has a degree from Harvard University. Amanda, who has already been working with the teachers of Kyrgyzstan for two years, is a true specialist in this field.

These American schools will also receive supplementary materials about American history and culture, which are being specially produced by Kyrgyz teachers to include information about similarities between our two countries. Teachers and students will also receive training to use computers and the internet through the State Department's Global Connections and Exchanges program. The goal of this program is to connect the pilot schools with schools in different regions of America so that students can write to each other, learn about each other and complete projects together.

Finally, we hope that the students, teachers and administrators of these schools will be able to participate in our Embassy's many exchange programs and travel to America. We have about 15 different exchange programs that send 200 citizens of Kyrgyzstan to America every year. These include school students, university students, teachers, professors, journalists, Deputies, artists, sportsmen and more. We also hope to bring students and teachers from America to visit these schools, so that they can meet their colleagues and see your beautiful country.

I am confident that this program will be a big success in Kyrgyzstan. I believe that it will contribute to the development of Kyrgyzstan by improving the quality of education here. Having learned modern, vibrant American English, Kyrgyzstani students will be able to study abroad, travel around the world, do business with foreigners, and invite tourists to Kyrgyzstan.

I want to say thank you to the Ministry of Education, the FORUM association, the Lingua school, the EduPress company, and everyone else who has worked on this terrific project. Unfortunately, I have to leave soon and hurry to another event. I hope to hear about the successes of this program and to visit the schools in the future. My Cultural Affairs Officer Michael Rosenthal, together with our specialist Amanda Wetsel, will answer any questions you might have.

Thank you! I wish you great success in the study of American English!