Inside

FEA ELECTION 2020

FEA members will vote this year to elect an FEA Europe Area Director, an FEA Director for DDESS, and an FEA Pacific Area Director.

See pages 5-9 for information!

Ballots will be mailed directly to all FEA Active Members on January 16, 2020.

Completed ballots must be received by FEA no later than March 24, 2020, in order to be included in the election tally.

Overseas Contract Heading To Mediation

Because DoDEA continues to insist upon many proposals that will be harmful to the learning environment, including several that are in violation of the law, terms of a new Negotiated Agreement for FEA members in the Overseas bargaining unit remained unsettled as the proscribed bargaining period ended in mid December.

As a result, the two sides will begin meeting in early January with a government-appointed mediator, with the goal of settling the many differences that remain between them.

Overview of DoDEA’s Most Harmful Proposals for the Overseas Contract, page 12

Bargaining of the Overseas contract started in June at the insistence of DoDEA despite the currently-valid Overseas contract’s prohibition against bargaining taking place while employees are on leave.

Following the schedule imposed by the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP), bargaining has continued over a number of weeks since then, sometimes virtually and sometimes in person, with five FEA members from the Pacific and Europe serving as the Association’s bargaining team for the in-person and virtual negotiations.

DoDEA does not appear to be willing to compromise on the issues, apparently hoping to eventually declare impasse so the White-House-appointed FSIP will impose contract terms favorable to management.

The FSIP-imposed ground rules for bargaining of the Overseas contract call for mediation to take place with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) if no agreement is reached at the end of the bargaining schedule. However, the FMCS mediator who will work with the two parties in hope of reaching compromise has the final say on when she will release the parties to the impasse panel.

The five Association members on FEA’s Overseas bargaining team will participate in-person for the first two weeks of mediation, then virtually for the remaining sessions. FEA legal staff are assisting in the bargaining.

A ratification vote may be held if the two sides reach a tentative agreement. See page 12 for more information.

Arbitrator’s Ruling on FEA-SR Contract Imminent, see page 13 for info
Attempts to deny or eliminate basic employee rights have now become a pattern for DoDEA.

We’ve been seeing it for the past year in the Agency’s illegal implementation of an unsigned contract on Stateside schools and we’re seeing it now in their efforts to have even more negative terms imposed upon Overseas workers as part of contract negotiations for that bargaining unit.

Throughout the negotiation of that Overseas contract, DoDEA staff have made clear that their sole priority is not improving the education environment or treating employees with respect; their priority is making life easier for DoDEA management and they see denying employees their most basic rights as the way to do so.

Take the issue of pay problems. DoDEA seems to think they can make them go away by making it harder for the Association to address them. They are wrong.

There is nothing more basic to any job than being paid correctly and on time.

This is one of the fundamental beliefs of FEA and one of our highest priorities in working on behalf of our members.

Over the years, FEA has had much success using the grievance procedure to remedy pay issues for our members.

DoDEA is now hoping to take that option away from the Association as part of the negotiation of a new Overseas contract. It is one of many rights the Agency hopes to strip from Overseas employees by having negative contract terms imposed by the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

But if FEA is unlawfully denied a grievance procedure to address pay problems, we will find other ways to work the issue for our members.

If necessary, we will take pay cases directly to federal court on behalf of our members.

The law is on the side of the employees when it comes to your right to be paid correctly. We have already made known to DoDEA that a change in venue will not diminish our commitment to members in any way. If we must bring our members’ pay issues to a judge instead of an arbitrator, we will do so.

We have and will continue to advocate for members by also bringing issues directly to the DoDEA staff who can address them.

The results have been encouraging.

I have heard from numerous members in recent weeks who report their reimbursements have been processed or are in the works.

Much of this progress is due to the conversations taking place between the Association and management, not because of an arbitrator’s ruling.

Legal action has been and will remain a very powerful weapon for FEA to use on behalf of our members. But if an agency rules to restrict our access to a grievance procedure, we will find other ways to see that management is made aware of the problems being created and is called upon to fix them – while we continue to fight to regain those rights illegally denied to us.

This Association and the advocacy we undertake for our members are not going anywhere!
In this, my final column as FEA Executive Director/General Counsel, I want to express my gratitude to our members and remind you all of the need for unity, particularly in the face of the ongoing attacks on our rights from management and the current administration.

It has been my honor to serve you as an employee of this Association for 35 years. I have always taken great pride in knowing that I work for education professionals: people who make a difference in children’s lives every day. I thank you all for the amazing work you do everyday and for the opportunity to represent you.

I do not wish to spend this time looking backwards. Instead, we must all look ahead.

Sadly, in the short term, it is not a very positive picture.

Our rights are being attacked on multiple fronts by a school administration that does not value its employees. Their efforts are being aided – and encouraged – by an administration that has made its goal clear: to destroy unions and employee rights.

Executive Orders are issued by the White House, illegally calling for the curtailing of Congressionally-mandated civil service rights and protections – such as due process and the ability to file grievances; those Executive Orders are used as a blueprint and an excuse by management to seek harmful contract provisions, which are then ruled on by anti-union/anti-employee activists appointed to supposedly neutral bodies by the same administration that issued the Orders in the first place.

The system is seriously broken and completely rigged against us at the moment.

In addition, the opponents of our schools see this present environment as an opportunity to attack our schools – despite their undeniable excellence.

As detailed on page 11, several of our smaller schools currently are under threat from Pentagon budget rebalancing. I fear before long these budget actions will lead to yet another call to end DoDEA’s Stateside schools, which have long been targeted by those who oppose their existence for purely political reasons.

Other threats include further taking of military construction funds from DoDEA schools for the border wall and attempts in Congress to create a voucher program for military dependents: a program that would not improve educational outcomes for DoDEA students but would threaten the existence of the excellent schools those students have long enjoyed.

A hostile, negative environment such as this generates much stress and much anger. It is common in such circumstances to turn that anger inward, against each other.

I hope you will never fall victim to this.

No matter how great the challenges that lay ahead, I hope you will always remember that you are stronger standing together than alone.

You are never alone when you are part of this union. Thousands of FEA members stand with you. MILLIONS of NEA members also stand with you, prepared to fight on your behalf to change the anti-employee environment we are now under.

As I prepare to end my time at FEA, I urge you all to never forget the value of that unity. Do not allow the stresses you are now under to promote division and factions among yourselves. You will always be stronger together. ALWAYS! That is why those who oppose workers rights are trying so desperately to end your union.

You will not win every fight – in fact, you are likely to lose more than you win until the present environment changes – but you can never win in the long run if you do not stand together now, when it matters most.

Unity! Now and forever! That has been and still remains my message to you all.
Hohenfels Educator Named One of Five Semi-Finalists Nationwide For Prestigious NEA Foundation Honor Recognizing Teaching Excellence

Patricia Hannon, a Reading Specialist at Hohenfels Elementary School in Germany, is one of five semi-finalists for the 2020 Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence.

The Horace Mann Award is presented each year by the NEA Foundation to recognize an outstanding public school educator. Hannon is the first FEA member selected as a semi-finalist for the award.

“I am humbled and deeply grateful for this opportunity.”

Hannon was nominated for the award by FEA last spring. FEA has nominated a number of outstanding members over the year for consideration by the NEA Foundation, but Hannon is the first to advance to the semi-finalist stage of the competition.

“I’m still pinching myself over the fact that I was chosen,” Hannon says. “FEA has so many incredible teacher-members and I’m lucky to have them as colleagues.”

The Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence recognizes an outstanding member of NEA each year who demonstrates achievement in classroom education and a commitment to advancing the profession of teaching.

Each state affiliate of NEA can nominate a single member each year for the award. All those state nominees are required to submit an application packet including a detailed resume and a first-person statement detailing the nominees’ achievements in five criteria:

- Professional practice
- Advocacy for the profession
- Attention to diversity
- Community engagement
- Leadership in professional development

Application packets are reviewed by the NEA Foundation and five semi-finalists are selected and interviewed.

A winner is selected from those five semi-finalist and will be announced at the NEA Foundation Gala in Washington DC. That event will take place in February 2020.

In her application packet, Hannon highlighted some of the innovative teaching techniques she uses with her reading students, such as incorporating things like music and motion into reading lessons and helping students develop confidence in their skills.

“I know that a part of my success is having such a strong team at Hohenfels,” Hannon says, adding the literacy program has also benefited from strong support from administrators.

“We’ve been able to push the boundaries of effective pedagogy and have become a leader in reading instruction in DoDEA.

“Most importantly, none of this would have happened without the trust and support of the military families we serve.”

Although she thinks being selected the winner of the Horace Mann Award would be a great honor, Hannon says she is more than grateful just to be where she is.

“I’ve already won! I get to work with terrific military families and colleagues every day,” Hannon says. “As far as the top prize, my goal is not to ‘win,’ but to do the absolute best job I can.

“Doing a stellar job representing our military community and FEA in DC is the ultimate goal and win.”

Interested In Applying For The NEA Foundation Award?

Each NEA State affiliate can nominate a single member annually to compete for the NEA Foundation’s Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence.

Any FEA Active Member can submit a nomination packet to FEA in order to be considered as FEA’s nominee for the 2021 NEA Foundation Award.

The nomination packet includes the potential nominee’s biographical information, a resume, letters of recommendation and endorsement, and a statement from the proposed awardee illustrating how she/he meets the award criteria.

Nomination packets must be submitted to FEA by April 1, 2020 for consideration.

Find the application info at feaonline.org/media/NEAFoundationApp.docx
NOTICE OF ELECTION
For Election of Executive Officers
Winter/Spring 2020

In accordance with the provisions of the Department of Labor Rules and Regulations governing elections, notice is hereby given to all reported members that an election for the purposes of electing Executive Officers of the Federal Education Association is to be conducted in a secret ballot election by the members. Balloting will be done by mail during the months of January, February and March and must be received by the Washington office not later than March 24, 2020.

The officers to be elected to the following positions shall serve a three-year term of office commencing on August 2, 2020, as stipulated by the FEA Constitution and Bylaws:

- FEA Director for DDESS
- Pacific Area Director
- Europe Area Director

These officers shall be elected by the membership of the geographic area each respectively represents.

FEA Members Vote This Year On Area Director Positions

Which offices are up for election this year?
Three Area Director positions will be voted on during this year’s elections. Only the members in the geographic Area represented by each position will vote for their respective director.

- FEA Pacific Area Director
- FEA Director for DDESS
- FEA Europe Area Director

Who are the candidates?
Biographies of all the candidates can be found on pages 5-9 of this newsletter. In addition, on January 9, 2020, flyers from the candidates will be posted at feaonline.org/election.htm

How long are the terms of office and when do the newly-elected officers’ terms begin?
There is a three-year term for each of the positions to be elected to the FEA Board of Directors.

Terms for all three offices to be elected this school year will begin on August 2, 2020.

Where is my ballot?
Ballots will be mailed individually to each FEA Active member on January 16, 2020.

When is my ballot due back to FEA for counting?
Ballots must be received by the close of business on March 24, 2020, to be counted.

What if my ballot never arrives?
Anytime after February 14, 2020, Local Presidents, FRSs and Area Directors may reproduce ballots for members who have not yet received theirs.

When will the count take place?
Counting will be done on March 25 and (if necessary) 26, 2020, in Washington, DC.

How do I find out who has won?
Results will be posted on the FEA Web site and in the Spring 2020 FEA Journal.

ATTENTION FRSs, LOCAL PRESIDENTS AND OTHER SCHOOL LEADERS:
Please remember that FEA Election Guidelines require you to post and/or distribute all campaign materials received in the exact same manner for each and every candidate.
AMY Sweeney

Present Location: Robert D. Edgren Middle/High School, Japan
Present Assignment: Spanish and Yearbook
Years in DoDEA: 18

Locations:
- Misawa, Japan (17 years)
- Okinawa (1 year)
- New Jersey Public Schools (7 years)

Offices and Committee Assignments:
- Northeast Asia Teachers Association (NEATA) Secretary (5 years)
- NEATA Bylaws Chair (4 years)
- Edgren FRS (7 years)
- Edgren FR (10 years)
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (2 years)
- NEA Educator Voice Academy (1 year)
- NEA Women’s Leadership Conference (1 year)

James Sellers

Present Location: Kadena Elementary School, Okinawa
Present Assignment: ESOL
Years in DoDEA: 11

Locations:
- Kadena Elementary School, Okinawa
- MC Perry Elementary School, Japan
- Mesa, Arizona

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:
- Northern Arizona University, BS, Elementary Education
- Northern Arizona University, MA, Bilingual Multicultural Education

Offices and Committee Assignments:
- FEA Pacific Area Director (1 year)
- FEA Local President (2 years)
- FEA Faculty Representative (1 year)
- FEA Faculty Representative Spokesperson (4 years)
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (2 years)
- MEA (Arizona) Faculty Representative (2 years)
- AEA (Arizona) Representative Assembly Delegate (2 years)
### Meet the Candidates for FEA Europe Area Director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>FEA Europe Area Director</th>
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<td><strong>TODD LAVERENTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fea</strong></td>
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**Present Location:** Hohenfels Middle/High School, Germany

**Present Assignment:** Middle School Language Arts

**Years in DoDEA:** 33

**Locations:**
- Hohenfels Middle/High School, Germany (25 years)
- Vilseck High School, Germany (8 years)
- Alba-Golden High School, Texas (3 years)

**Universities, Degrees, Certificates:**
- Oklahoma City University, B.A.

**Offices and Committee Assignments:**
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Hohenfels Middle/High School (10 years)
- Faculty Representative, Hohenfels Middle/High School and Vilseck High School (5 years)
- Building Representative, Alba-Golden High School, Texas (2 years)

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| **TERRY McCCLAIN** | **Fea**                  |

**Present Location:** Garmisch Elementary/ Middle School, Germany

**Present Assignment:** MS/HS English, Math, History, K-12 P.E.

**Years in DoDEA:** 30

**Locations:**
- Garmisch, Germany (17 years)
- Bad Aibling, Germany (13 years)
- Stillwater, Oklahoma (6 years)

**Universities, Degrees, Certificates:**
- Oklahoma State University, B.S., Education Elementary with minor in English
- Oklahoma University Administration, Curriculum and Supervision

**Awards:**
- Outstanding Young Men of America 1986
- SMS Teacher of the year 1984, Oklahoma

**Offices and Committee Assignments:**
- Europe Area Director (3 years)
- Division Representative (8 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson (13 years)
- Faculty Representative (4 years)
- Grievance Coordinator (2 years)
**Candidate** | **FEA Director for DDESS**
---|---
**LAURA HASTINGS**

Present Location: DeLallo Elementary School, Camp Lejeune, NC  
Present Assignment: Elementary Instructional Support Teacher K-5  
Years in DoDEA: 29

Locations:  
- Camp Lejeune Schools (29 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:  
- Walden University, M.Ed., Educational Leadership  
- Marywood University, B.S., Elementary Education

Awards:  
- NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence – California Casualty Awardee, 2017

Offices and Committee Assignments:  
- Lejeune Education Association, President (14 years)  
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (1 year)  
- FEA-SR Master Labor Agreement Contract Negotiation Team (6 years)  
- Sigma Alpha Pi National Society of Leadership and Success (2 years)  
- FEA-SR Grievance Committee Team (2 years)  
- FEA-SR Representative, DoDEA Social Studies Task Force (4 years)  
- Lejeune Education Association, Vice President (6 years)

**DIANE M. GIBBS**

Present Location: Gordon Elementary School, Fort Bragg, NC  
Present Assignment: K-5 ESOL Teacher  
Years in DoDEA: 25

Locations:  
- Fort Bragg, NC (16 years)  
- Fort Campbell, KY (9 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:  
- Austin Peay State University, M.A. Ed., Curriculum and Instruction  
- Murray State University, ESOL Certificate  
- Austin Peay State University, Reading Specialist Certificate

Offices and Committee Assignments:  
- FEA-SR Local President (5 years)  
- FEA-SR Vice President (1 year)  
- FEA-SR Building Representative (7 years)  
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (5 years)  
- FEA State Caucus Secretary (4 years)
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>LAHOMA (CC) HENDRIX</strong></th>
<th><strong>Candidate</strong> for <strong>FEA</strong> Director for <strong>DDESS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Present Location:</strong> Dexter Elementary School, Fort Benning, GA</td>
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<td><strong>Present Assignment:</strong> 4th Grade</td>
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<td><strong>Years in DoDEA:</strong> 11</td>
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<td><strong>Locations:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dexter Elementary School, Fort Benning, GA (2 years)</td>
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<td>• McBride Elementary School, Fort Benning, GA (1 year)</td>
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<td>• Sollars Elementary School, Misawa, Japan (2 years)</td>
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<td>• Bitburg Elementary School, Bitburg, Germany (3 years)</td>
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<td>• Smith Elementary School, Baumholder, Germany (3 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Universities, Degrees, Certificates:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• University of Phoenix, M.Ed.</td>
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<td>• Park University, B.S., Business Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fresno Pacific University, Middle School Math Qualification Hours</td>
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<td><strong>Awards:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cash Performance Award, Bitburg Elementary, Bitburg, Germany (1 year)</td>
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<td>• Cash Award, Sollars Elementary, Misawa, Japan (1 year)</td>
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<td><strong>Offices and Committee Assignments:</strong></td>
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<td>• Benning Area Council (2 years)</td>
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<td>• Human and Civil Rights Coordinator, Fort Benning (2 years)</td>
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<td>• Faculty Representative, Bitburg Elementary, Bitburg, Germany (1 year)</td>
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<td>• Human and Civil Rights Coordinator, Bitburg Elementary, Bitburg, Germany (1 year)</td>
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<td>• NEA Women’s Leadership Training (WLT) Conference (2 years)</td>
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<td>• NEA Minority Leadership Conference (2 years)</td>
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<td>• NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (1 year)</td>
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<th><strong>LUIs MANuEL RIOS</strong></th>
<th><strong>Candidate</strong> for <strong>FEA</strong> Director for <strong>DDESS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Present Location:</strong> Quantico Middle/High School, Marine Base Quantico, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Present Assignment:</strong> Secondary Physics and Middle School Science (7th Grade)</td>
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<td><strong>Years in DoDEA:</strong> 31</td>
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<td><strong>Locations:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Quantico Middle/High School (5 years)</td>
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<td>• Menwith Hill School, Harrogate, United Kingdom (8 years)</td>
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<td>• University of Puerto Rico, Cayey, Puerto Rico (1 year)</td>
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<td>• Antilles Intermediate School, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico (7 years)</td>
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<td>• Antilles Elementary School, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico (10 years)</td>
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<td><strong>Universities, Degrees, Certificates:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Universidad Central de Bayamon, Learning Impaired Teaching Certificate (Mild to Moderate)</td>
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<td>• University of Phoenix, MAED Administration and Supervision of Schools (Elementary and Secondary Principal Certification)</td>
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<td>• Ohio State University, Research: Organic Chemistry/Biochemistry (certificate)</td>
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<td>• University of Puerto Rico, Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude</td>
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<td><strong>Awards:</strong></td>
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<td>• CSI Data (cash award) Menwith Hill School</td>
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<td>• AdvanceEd Visit (cash award) Menwith Hill School</td>
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<td>• Principal’s Award, Antilles Elementary School</td>
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<td><strong>Offices and Committee Assignments:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• FEA-SR (Americas): Quantico Education Association, President (6 years)</td>
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<td>• FEA (Overseas): Menwith Hill School Faculty Representative Spokesperson (4 years)</td>
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<td>• ACEA (Puerto Rico): Grievance/Negotiated Agreement Chairperson (2 years)</td>
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<td>• ACEA (Puerto Rico): Antilles Elementary School Faculty Representative (7 years)</td>
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<td>• Association of Latinos in the Science Department, Ohio State University, President (2 years)</td>
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<td>• Hermandad Latina, Ohio State University, Vice President (2 years)</td>
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FEA-SR moves toward implementation of academic credits victory following positive FLRA decision

FEA-SR bargaining unit members who were improperly denied salary adjustments for academic credits earned took a big step toward positive resolution this fall, following a decision by the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The FLRA in October ruled in favor of FEA-Stateside Region over management’s appeal of a 2018 arbitrator’s decision. That arbitrator found DoDEA had acted improperly by denying salary adjustments to some FEA-SR bargaining unit members whose academic credits were not recognized by the Agency.

The arbitrator ruled in July 2018 that DoDEA must count all relevant semester hours when setting employees’ salaries, regardless whether the semester hours were earned before or after the awarding of an academic degree. DoDEA appealed the arbitrator’s decision to the FLRA, who sided with FEA-SR in a ruling this October.

FEA-SR hopes to meet soon with DoDEA officials to begin implementing the arbitrator’s decision.

FEA-SR General Counsel Ben Hunter says DoDEA has expressed a willingness to meet in order to begin the implementation process. There are still, however, details that would have to be resolved – in particular, determining exactly which individuals were improperly denied credit for semester hours and should receive relief.

The relief awarded by the arbitrator requires the agency to retroactively place affected individuals on the correct salary lane and step. Impacted educators are entitled to backpay going back to November 2010.

DoDEA is obligated to provide FEA-SR with information on who is affected under the ruling. At this time, Hunter says, FEA-SR members who think they are due money as a result of this win do not need to take any action and no one needs to send anything to him or to DoDEA. But anyone who believes they were improperly denied credit for semester hours taken or academic credits earned may wish to locate their transcripts and other records in order to have them handy if and when it becomes necessary to submit them in the future.

STRONGER TOGETHER: FEA Europe Win Benefited FEA-SR Case

FEA-Stateside Region’s victory in its academic credits case follows a similar win by FEA Europe General Counsel Bill Freeman in 2012 for Overseas bargaining unit members, highlighting the synergy that occurs between units.

Although the two cases involved different contracts, FEA-SR General Counsel Ben Hunter says Freeman’s case provided an important legal framework for FEA-SR to pursue the issue in arbitration.

Hunter says Freeman provided helpful advice as he developed the contractual and legal arguments for FEA-SR’s case.

“I’m very grateful to Bill for all his advice,” says Hunter. “It was great to have access to his experience arguing a similar case. It was very helpful as I worked up our arguments and our strategy.”

The cases differed, Hunter explains, in that DoDEA’s arguments in the Overseas case were based mostly on regulations while its arguments in the FEA-SR case relied more on past practice as a defense. The Association’s position in both cases, he says, was that the respective negotiated agreements for FEA-SR and Overseas did not require academic credits to be earned after the awarding of a degree for those credits to count towards salary adjustments.

Freeman’s victory has produced millions in back pay and interest for Overseas bargaining unit members since 2012, including some who have since been reassigned to DoDEA America’s schools. The size and scope of the FEA-SR awards won’t be known for some time but could total in the millions as well.

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Association leaders at Devers Elementary school on Fort Bragg came up with a novel way of informing their members about the Federal Labor Relations Authority ruling in favor of FEA-Stateside Region in its academic credits case: a gift-wrapped announcement about the outcome.
Small Schools, Other DoDEA Programs Threatened By Pentagon “Night Court”

Several small schools throughout DoDEA have been threatened with closure and spending on other programs, such as the Overseas Transfer program, has been curtailed due to an ongoing budget review being conducted by the Pentagon.

Dubbed “night court,” the budget review looks for funding deemed to be outside the Pentagon’s top military priorities so the money can be redirected to programs considered more necessary for the force’s lethality and effectiveness.

Several months ago, as part of the process, DoDEA was told it must justify the continued existence of several schools with enrollments under 100 students. The schools being scrutinized are:

- Dahlgren School, Virginia
- Kleine Brogel ES, Germany
- Garmisch ES/MS, Germany
- Livorno ES/MS, Italy
- Sevilla ES/MS, Spain

Croughton Elementary in England was also listed for review but that school is already scheduled for closure at the end of the current school year.

The closure of any one of these schools would create significant hardship for the students and families.

If their schools were closed, students at the overseas schools would face either hour-long bus rides to the nearest DoDEA school or be required to attend international schools, whose curricula differ greatly from U.S. schools.

Students at Dahlgren could see their school taken over by the surrounding county school system or be required to attend schools off base, likely resulting in overcrowded schools, security concerns and long delays with the bussing of students onto or off of the Dahlgren complex for classes each day.

The fact the necessity of these schools is being reviewed does not mean any or all will be closed. No definitive word about the future of these schools has been announced and FEA/NEA will be urging lawmakers to support their continued existence.

DoDEA in December announced it would not be funding an Overseas transfer program this school year because of the budget scrutiny. The Agency claims it is reviewing the transfer program but has given no indication if or when the program will resume, despite its undoubted importance and value to employees.

Another potential target for the budget review may be DoDEA’s Stateside schools.

Although no specific review of those schools has been announced yet, the Stateside schools have been a frequent target of anti-education forces who seek to use budget cuts as a justification for transferring control of the schools to county or other local school systems, or even hiring private companies to run the schools.

The Pentagon has already shown its willingness to divert much-needed school construction funds from DoDEA projects in order to fund President Trump’s border wall.

With news reports about the night court sessions indicating that most “low hanging fruit” has already been scrubbed from the Pentagon budget, school funding and other DoDEA programs will come increasingly under the microscope.

Retiring, Incoming Feds Gain Moving Tax Reimbursement Under NDAA

Civilian employees retiring/separating from federal service as well as those first entering the government workforce are now eligible for reimbursement of taxes on government-provided moving allowances and assistance, thanks to legislation long advocated by FEA/NEA.

The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) extended tax reimbursements to civilian feds being moved by the government from the U.S. to their first overseas duty station as well as to retiring/separating civilian feds being moved back to the U.S. from their final overseas post.

The value of most government-provided moving services and allowances became taxable January 1, 2018, following the passage of a new federal tax code the previous year. Prior to that time, government employees paid no tax on such moving help.

Similar tax reimbursements were granted in 2018 to current federal employees but only covered moves from one duty location to another, thereby excluding anyone who was moving to or from a non-duty station, such as a retiree or new employee.

The tax reimbursement programs being provided to the incoming/departing civilian employees will be retroactive to January 1, 2018, meaning anyone who has entered or left government service the past two years and was taxed on the value of government-provided moving assistance will now be able to apply for reimbursement.

The reimbursements cover “substantially all” federal, state and local tax liabilities, according to the government. Eligible current and former civilian feds will have to apply to the government in order to receive the tax reimbursements.

Details for how those individuals should apply have not yet been made available by the government.

FEA, through NEA Government Relations, has been a leading advocate for the extension of this tax assistance to incoming/departing feds. We wish to thank NEA lobbyist Sylvia Johnson for all her work on this issue over the past two years on behalf of FEA members.
DoDEA Proposals Would Destroy Working, Learning Environment in Overseas Schools

Throughout the process of bargaining a new Overseas contract, DoDEA has made clear that its priority is expanding the authority of management over employees, and the Agency doesn’t seem to mind the harm that will be done to its schools in the process.

Below are four of the major categories of harmful proposals DoDEA has put forth. These do not encompass every negative proposal DoDEA is pushing as the Overseas contract bargaining heads to mediation, but these are among the most punitive to employees and their rights.

During mediation, and if necessary during the impasse procedure with the Federal Service Impasses Panel, FEA’s bargaining team will continue its attempts to dissuade DoDEA from pursuing these harmful measures. Should these changes be imposed upon DoDEA’s Overseas schools, the damage to working and learning conditions, employee morale and the ability of DoDEA to recruit talented educators would be catastrophic.

ADVERSE ACTIONS

• DoDEA proposes to reduce the standard necessary to justify discipline or removal of Overseas employees from the current “just cause” to the ambiguous rationale that such actions are for the “efficiency” of the Agency
• This would give DoDEA unchecked authority to discipline or remove employees at will
• It is not difficult to predict how quickly such a system would be abused by any principal or administrator who dislikes an employee
• DoDEA’s proposals would also give Overseas employees accused of shortcomings just 30 days to improve or risk being disciplined or removed; not nearly enough time to take classes/trainings if needed

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

• DoDEA seeks to weaken or eliminate nearly all grievance rights for Overseas employees and the Association
• DoDEA proposes to require all allegations by Overseas employees of pay problems and improper debt collections to be addressed under the Debt Collection Act, rather than through grievances; making resolution much longer and more difficult
• DoDEA proposes to eliminate “anticipatory” grievances, such as the “goodbye grievance” used to protect Overseas employees from false debt collections after they depart DoDEA

DUTY DAY

• DoDEA seeks to extend the duty day in Overseas schools by 90 minutes each day
• Under DoDEA’s proposals, Overseas schools would have an 8.5-hour work day (8 hours of duty time plus a 30-minute duty-free lunch)
• DoDEA also proposes doing away with guaranteed amounts of prep time for educators in favor of vague promises of “reasonable/adequate” prep time
• If enacted, DoDEA’s proposals would increase the amount of duty time for Overseas educators annually by roughly 20 percent with no added pay; a clear violation of the U.S. Code that governs salaries for DoDEA’s Overseas educators

OFFICIAL TIME

• DoDEA proposes to eliminate nearly all Official Time granted to Overseas employees elected by their peers to union positions
• Such official time if vital for these union reps to resolve issues for employees
• Official time – which is not used for internal union business – helps these employee representatives meet the Association’s duty of fair representation

Overseas Members: Make Sure FEA Has Your Correct E-mail Address For Possible Contract Ratification Vote

If FEA and DoDEA reach a tentative agreement on a new Negotiated Agreement for Overseas employees, the bargaining ground rules stipulate that such a tentative agreement must be voted on by FEA’s overseas members.

If those members were to vote against ratifying such a tentative agreement, FEA and DoDEA would be required to return to bargaining.

Should such a ratification vote become necessary, the ground rules imposed by the Federal Service Impasses Panel allow just 15 days for the vote to occur. Because of this very short time frame and the fact the voters are located around the globe, the vote would have to be conducted via e-mail.

In that event, FEA will send out multiple notices to Pacific and Europe members, letting them know if and when such a vote would take place and how the ratification ballot would be sent to them. At this point, it is impossible to guess how likely a vote is to happen or, if so, when.

To make sure you receive information in a timely manner, we urge all members to confirm that FEA has your correct personal e-mail address.

If you regularly receive the FEA President’s Report – the last report prior to the Journal publication was sent electronically to all members on December 17 – then you can be assured FEA has your correct e-mail.

If you did not receive that December 17 FEA President’s Report in your personal (non-DoDEA) e-mail, please send a message to fea@feानली online.org, notifying us of your correct e-mail address so we can confirm it in our database. Be sure to include your name and school along with your e-mail address.
Arbitrator To Rule On Illegality Of Unsigned MLA Imposed on FEA-SR

As this issue of the FEA Journal went to press, FEA-Stateside Region awaited an arbitrator’s ruling on whether DoDEA illegally implemented a successor Master Labor Agreement on educators in DoDEA Americas schools, including Guam.

FEA-SR brought the case before the neutral arbitrator in September, following management’s implementation of the unsigned MLA last spring.

Among the harmful provisions enacted by management under the unsigned MLA are an additional 24 hours of unpaid duty time per academic quarter and a lower salary increase than the three percent raise Stateside employees are owed under the still-valid contract from 2005.

FEA-SR is seeking backup, plus interest, for all employees impacted by the bogus contract implementation, a permanent adjustment in pay to reflect the full salary increase bargaining unit members should have received this school year, restoration of any leave time improperly charged to employees due to the imposed 24 added hours, and a requirement that DoDEA abide by the 2005 negotiated agreement until a successor agreement is fully and legally bargained to completion.

At question is whether DoDEA acted illegally by rushing to impose a successor Master Labor Agreement that was not signed by both parties.

The Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) imposed multiple articles on the contract in late 2018 after DoDEA asked FSIP to declare an impasse and take jurisdiction over the negotiation of a new agreement.

FEA-SR contested part of the FSIP ruling on grounds the panel had overstepped its jurisdiction in some of the contract articles it imposed.

That challenge should have been addressed before any further action on the successor MLA could take place. Instead, DoDEA unilaterally claimed the contract was in effect – thereby denying FEA-SR their right to contest the FSIP ruling – and rushed to impose the contract last spring on educators in Stateside schools, including Guam.

Written briefs in the case were submitted to the arbitrator by FEA-SR and DoDEA in late November. The arbitrator’s decision, whenever it is handed down, may only be the beginning of a drawn-out legal process seeking restitution for DDESS educators.

FEA-SR will alert members as soon as the arbitrator’s ruling is known.

DoDEA Continues To Drop On List Of Best Places To Work In Government

Not surprisingly, given its treatment of its employees in recent years, DoDEA has moved even lower on an annual assessment of federal workplaces.

Results of the 2019 survey of Best Places To Work In The Federal Government were released in December.

Of the 420 agencies and subunits included in the survey, DoDEA was ranked number 366.

That is nine positions lower than DoDEA was ranked the previous year and puts DoDEA in the bottom 13 percent of federal workplaces.

DoDEA employees, along with other federal employees, were surveyed during spring 2019 utilizing the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

Employees are asked to respond to dozens of questions covering categories such as Effective Leadership, Pay, Teamwork and Innovation.

The index score used to rank the agencies is based on responses to three particular survey questions:

• I recommend my organization as a good place to work. (Q. 40)
• Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job? (Q. 69)
• Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization? (Q. 71)

You can view the full rankings and survey results by going to bestplacetowork.org/rankings/detail/DD16

DoDEA’s Ranking On Best Places To Work Survey

2018

#357
out of
415
federal workplaces

2019

#366
out of
420
federal workplaces
Building A More Cohesive FEA Retired Community

Although he recently retired from DoDEA, longtime Association leader Michael Priser is not done organizing fellow educators.

Priser successfully applied for an NEA organizing grant to help build ties between his fellow retirees with the goal of making the Association’s retired membership as cohesive as the Active members.

Priser, working with FEA Retired Coordinator Trudy Pollard, has already developed a quarterly e-newsletter now being distributed to FEA Retired members. The newsletter covers issues of concern to retirees as well as topics impacting the schools they served while working.

Because they are no longer bound by the Hatch Act, Priser sees FEA Retired members as ideal spokespeople and activists for issues that Active members may be unable to raise without risking repercussions.

In addition, there are numerous retirement issues in need of addressing, he says. “We need to let our members know what might be happening with changes in health care, social security, progress in repealing the GPO/WEP (Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision), and supporting strong public schools,” Priser says.

In addition to developing the e-newsletter, Priser plans to use the NEA grant funds to travel to gatherings such as the annual DODDS Reunion in July to educate people about the benefits of FEA Retired membership – such as the significant political clout NEA can bring to legislative issues affecting them. He also wants to educate currently Active members about FEA Retired membership, which they can join prior to retirement for a one-time fee by going to feaonline.org/retired.htm

“It is our goal with this grant that FEA Retired can create a structure that will continue to reach out to both active and retired members, mobilize members for positive action, and maintain our strong sense of family and community,” Priser says. “The life of a DoDEA employee is a positive journey – and better when it is shared.”

Orlando To Host the NEA Retired Conference in March – All Retired Members Are Encouraged To Attend

The 2020 NEA Retired Conference will be held March 15-16, 2020, at the Hyatt Regency Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. The theme this year is “OUR DEMOCRACY, OUR RESPONSIBILITY, OUR TIME!” The online early registration opens January 6, 2020. At that time, a link will be available at nnea.org/retired to register for the conference. Any FEA Retired member may attend.
Questions About NEA Member Benefits? Call or Go Online!

The NEA Member Benefits program provides many programs and services to FEA members. Please contact Member Benefits with questions about any of their services using the following toll-free numbers in applicable areas:

**Stateside**
1-800-637-4636

**Overseas**
First dial the AT&T Direct Access Code
In **Germany** and **UK**
0800-2255288
In **Japan**
00539-111

Then dial Member Benefits at
800-893-0396

And don’t forget the Member Benefits Web site. You can access information on all of NEA-MB’s programs, get current rates on CDs and investment funds, and sign up for other services.

www.neamb.com

The journal is a quarterly publication of the Federal Education Association. Contributions, letters, photographs and other submissions to the journal are welcome and should be sent to the address below.

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H.T. Nguyen, Executive Director
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Anita Lang, NEA Director for FEA
Alina Rozanski, Human & Civil Rights Coordinator
James Sellers, Pacific Area Director
Jane Loggins, FEA Director for DDESS
Terry McClain, Europe Area Director

Federal Education Association • 1201 16th St. NW, Suite 117 • Washington, DC 20036 • 202-822-7850 • Fax: 202-822-7867
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Calendar of Events

**JANUARY**

16  FEA Area Director Election Ballots Mailed to All FEA Active Members

**FEBRUARY**

2  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

17  Presidents' Day

1-3  FEA Pacific Area Leadership Council Meeting

**MARCH**

2  NEA's Read Across America

20  Presidents' Day

24  Deadline for receipt of ballots for FEA Area Director Election

Farewell and Thanks H.T. and CONNIE!

FEA loses two irreplaceable member advocates this school year. FEA Executive Director/General Counsel H.T. Nguyen and Director of Administration Connie Shanaghan are retiring after nearly 70 years of combined service to the Association and its members. We wish you both all the best and thank you for your dedication to FEA's members and its mission of advocating for them. You will be missed!

Use this ID Number to Log in to www.feaonline.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL