

**RA 2019 – HOUSTON  
FEA Delegate Communication #1**

## ***HOWDY!***

Congratulations on your election as a delegate to the 2019 NEA Representative Assembly (NEA-RA). This is the first of several e-newsletters you will receive between now and this summer's meeting. Our goal is to make sure you have all the information you need to be a confident, self-assured and well-prepared delegate to the NEA-RA. Or, if that's shooting too high, we at least want to make sure you get to the right place at the right time – and we'll walk you through the rest once we're all together in Houston.

Being a delegate to the NEA-RA will be one of the most energizing, enlightening and exhausting experiences of your life. But, if you're like most attendees, you'll want to come back again and again! As a delegate, you will have the opportunity to listen, learn, debate, vote and engage in numerous issues that are vital to your profession and your livelihood. In addition, you will attend the FEA Annual Membership Meeting, where you will be able to hear from and question members of the FEA Board of Directors and FEA staff about issues specific to you as a DoDEA employee and FEA member. You will meet fellow education professionals from around DoDEA and around the United States. We hope you will also learn a lot more about your professional association and about the CRUCIAL role played by actively involved members such as you – FEA and NEA could not possibly exist without you.

So get ready this summer for a lot of networking, a lot of listening, a lot of debating, a lot of voting and just enough sleep and caffeine to help you get through the week. Welcome to your 2019 NEA Representative Assembly!

### ***“WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?”***

As mentioned above, FEA will be sending you periodic e-newsletters to prepare you for the NEA-RA and the FEA Annual Membership Meeting. We try to send information in small, periodic amounts rather than dump everything on you all at once. However, **if you have questions at any time**, you should feel free to send them to Gary Hritz, FEA's Meeting Coordinator. He can be reached at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org) or at 202-822-7850.

**For now, there are only two things you need to start working on:**

1. Arranging your travel to/from Houston for the FEA and NEA meetings
2. Completing your hotel reservation form so you've got a place to sleep

Delegates to the meetings are responsible for arranging their own travel arrangements to/from Houston. You can travel however you like: plane, train, car, covered wagon – whatever. Information on airports, train stations and the hotel address is included later in this newsletter.

As for your hotel room, FEA will make that reservation for you, based upon information you provide to us. More on that below.

***“WHERE AND WHEN ARE THESE MEETINGS?”***

***Plan to arrive in Houston, Texas, the afternoon of June 30 and to depart the morning of July 8.***

- The first meeting you will attend is the FEA Annual Membership Meeting. That will be held July 1 and 2 at the Royal Sonesta hotel, west of downtown by the Galleria shopping mall. This is the hotel where the FEA delegation will be staying throughout the week. We'll give you more info on the hotel, including how to make your reservation, later in this newsletter.
- The FEA Human & Civil Rights Coordinator typically schedules a program the evening before the FEA Annual Membership Meeting, so if you arrive by the afternoon of June 30 you'll be in the hotel early enough to attend that evening's HCR event. More info on that HCR event will be included in future delegate newsletters.
- The NEA Representative Assembly will be held at the Houston Convention Center. The RA will convene the morning of July 4 and meet each day until the meeting wraps up sometime on July 7. The RA typically lasts into the evening on the last day, so delegates should plan to fly out on July 8. NEA will provide buses to transport our delegates between our hotel and the Houston Convention Center each day before and after the RA session, so you don't need to worry about getting yourself there and back.

## **“WHERE WILL I BE STAYING AND HOW DO I MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS?”**

FEA delegates will be staying at the Royal Sonesta hotel, located several miles west of downtown Houston, near the Galleria shopping mall and a number of dining/shopping options. <https://www.sonesta.com/us/texas/houston/royal-sonesta-houston-galleria>

The FEA Annual Membership Meeting and the FEA Human and Civil Rights event will be held at the Royal Sonesta. During the NEA-RA, shuttle busses will run to the Houston Convention Center before and after the NEA meeting, so you do not need to arrange your own transportation to/from the NEA-RA.

ALL RESERVATIONS FOR THE ROYAL SONESTA MUST BE MADE THROUGH GARY BY FILLING OUT AND RETURNING THE HOTEL RESERVATION FORM SENT WITH THIS NEWSLETTER. This is because FEA contracts with one hotel for a block of rooms each year in order to obtain a reduced group rate and to secure meeting space for our various functions.

***Please complete and return the room reservation form e-mailed to you along with this delegate newsletter no later than April 22.***

You must return your completed room reservation form to Gary Hritz at the FEA Washington DC office. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR RESERVATION FORM DIRECTLY TO THE HOTEL OR ATTEMPT TO MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATION ONLINE.** If you have questions about the hotel, please contact Gary at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org).

The room rate for the Royal Sonesta is \$129 per night. All of the rooms in our room block are king bed singles.

## ***“HOW DO I GET THERE?”***

### **DRIVING**

The Royal Sonesta is located at 2222 West South Loop, Houston, TX 77027.

Parking rates currently are \$34 daily for valet parking and \$24 daily for self parking.

### **FLYING**

Houston is served by two airports:

*Walter P. Hobby Airport* – the smaller of the two airports and slightly closer to downtown, located south of downtown Houston.

**Distance to Royal Sonesta:** 16 Miles

**Estimated SuperShuttle Charge (one way):** \$24

*George Bush Intercontinental Airport* – larger and located in the northern Houston suburbs.

**Distance to Royal Sonesta:** 28 Miles

**Estimated SuperShuttle Charge (one way):** \$27

### **TRAIN**

Houston Amtrak Station is located downtown, approximately 9 miles to the Royal Sonesta.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

There is no direct public transportation from either airport or the train station to the Royal Sonesta. The hotel recommends using SuperShuttle ([www.supershuttle.com](http://www.supershuttle.com)), taxis or ride share services (Uber, Lyft) as transportation options. There is NO hotel shuttle to/from the airport, though there is a hotel shuttle that can transport guests within 3 miles of the hotel at no charge.

***Questions about any aspect of the FEA/NEA meetings?***

***Please contact Gary Hritz at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org) or 202-822-7855***

### ***Your TO DO List:***

1. Complete the Royal Sonesta Room Reservation Form and return it to Gary as soon as possible, but no later than April 22.
2. Start working on your travel arrangements to/from Houston. Plan to arrive at the Royal Sonesta by late afternoon June 30 and to depart anytime on July 8.

## THE AGENDA SO FAR

(More events will likely be added as the meeting dates approach)

All FEA events to be held at The Royal Sonesta Hotel, 2222 West Loop South, Houston, TX 77027

All NEA events to be held at the Houston Convention Center (NEA will provide transportation for all delegates between our hotel and the convention center)

### June 30

- 5:30pm – 8:30pm – Diversity training session hosted by FEA Human & Civil Rights Department – Royal Sonesta Hotel in Champions III

A light buffet of soup, salads and sandwiches will be available between 5:30 and 6:30 for delegates who attend. The meeting and training session will begin at 6:30pm and last until about 8:30pm. (Delegates and Association members only, please.)

### July 1

- 8am-5pm – FEA Annual Membership Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 6pm-8pm – American Foreign Service Protective Association (AFSPA) Reception for FEA Delegates and guests. Light hors d'oeuvres and an open bar will be provided – Royal Sonesta, balcony outside Champions rooms (Family members and guests are welcome to attend)

### July 2

- 8am-12:30pm – FEA Annual Membership Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 12:30pm-1:30pm – **NEW DELEGATES TRAINING** – site to be determined, lunch will be provided
- 1:30pm-3pm – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V

### July 3\*

- 8am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 9am-5pm – Delegate Registration and NEA Expo, Houston Convention Center (transportation provided to/from hotel)
- 6pm-10pm – NEA HCR Awards Program – Houston Convention Center  
Information on reserving tickets for this event will be included in a future delegates' newsletter. Please Note: In a change from years past, NEA will NOT be providing bus transportation between hotels and the HCR awards program – delegates will need to arrange their own transportation (taxi, Uber/Lyft) to and from the event.

### July 4\*

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V

- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 5\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 6\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 7\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am until whenever the meeting ends – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

*\*Delegates will be provided with a voucher good for breakfast in the hotel's restaurant on the dates with asterisks (July 3-7). The restaurant opens at 6:30am. Please plan to eat prior to the start of our caucus meeting each morning. No other meals will be provided except where noted in the above agenda.*

**Questions about any aspect of the FEA/NEA meetings?  
Please contact Gary Hritz at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org) or 202-822-7855**