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Inside

FEA ELECTION 2022

Find biographies of the candidates and other information on this school year's election of five at-large officers to serve on the FEA Board of Directors.

See pages 4-7 for information!

Ballots will be mailed directly to all FEA Active Members on or before January 14, 2022.

Completed ballots must be received by FEA no later than March 28, 2022, in order to be included in the election tally.

Assisting Educators When They Need It Most

Our educators often work thousands of miles from their families and have taught for almost two years during a pandemic. Despite this, they remain passionate and diligent about educating and inspiring the students of military families. At the very least, they should be paid accurately and timely, and management should be responsive. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

That's why FEA looks to assist DoDEA educators with these situations whenever we can. From helping resolve pay issues to expediting fixes for urgent travel problems, the association helps members and provides a voice when things do not go as planned.

In one recent instance, FEA assisted a member with a longtime pay problem:

"Before retiring I had to resolve a lingering issue I submitted to Global Inquiry with regards to my Pay Step being incorrect for several years. As soon as I contacted FEA with this issue, they took immediate action and helped get it resolved in just a few days."

On another occasion, we assisted a DoDEA teacher and FEA member from the Pacific area with her pay issues. When she noticed her daily rate and allotment

were zeroed out for one of her two direct deposit accounts, she brought the issue up with DoDEA but received an incoherent explanation and no resolution. She then "reached out to FEA to assist with a pay audit from 2019 to the present. [FEA] requested all my LESs and were able to provide a very thorough explanation of the issue. My allotment was then corrected from zero back to the original amount I set aside to come out my pay into my other bank account."

FEA also hears from members who have issues with receiving their Renewal Agreement Travel tickets or vouchers from DoDEA. The association is often able to assist with expediting fixes to these problems, such as when two members recently received assistance in getting home during their break:

"It was a week before we were to fly back home for RAT, but we had not received our itinerary or tickets. It was important for us to get back because my son had college orientation coming up. I contacted FEA and I received our tickets 3 days later. FEA assistance really made a difference and we made it to orientation on time!"

FEA members also sometimes have problems getting their travel reimbursed, but the FEA team is happy to help with these issues whenever we can, as we did for this member:

"After returning from my Renewal Agreement Travel, I submitted my travel voucher for reimbursement. Instead, due to an obscure rule I was not informed of, I was told they would not reimburse my travel and I now owed the government over \$5,000. Thankfully, I saved and documented all travel-related communications and, with the help of the FEA team, was able to get this resolved."

FEA fights for its members so they can focus on doing their jobs, educating the children of military families. This is your association. If you need assistance with an issue with management, please contact your local FRS, who can advise you or help get your issue elevated up the FEA chain. Be sure to use the FEA membership folder to keep copies of your pay documents and other important communications.

Has FEA assisted you in a time of need?

Tell us your story at fea@feasonline.org.

Association Business

Richard Tarr

FEA Executive Director



FEA's Washington DC office sends out frequent updates on issues of concern to Association members at their personal (non DoDEA) e-mail address.

If you are not receiving updates from FEA in your e-mail, please notify us at fea@feaonline.org

: You Are The Most Important Part of FEA

The upcoming election of At-Large officers to the FEA Board of Directors is an excellent reminder of the importance of voting, as well as reminding us of the necessity for members to take an active role in the Association.

FEA is a member-driven organization. That means members just like you are the ones who make the decisions and determine the course of FEA. There are many ways you can do so and all of them are vitally important to our Association.

When many of us think of decision makers, we think of elected leaders. Those are certainly important positions and I strongly urge all members eligible to vote in the upcoming At-Large election – as well as in the many other elections to be held this year at all levels of the Association – to make your voices heard by voting to select the people who will represent you.

But there are many, many other roles throughout FEA that are equally important as Board officers. Positions such as Building Representative, Faculty

Spokesperson, Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Local Association President, Membership Chair and Human and Civil Rights Coordinator (to name just a few) present opportunities for you to help your fellow members while shaping FEA into the type of organization you want it to be for the future.

And if you don't want to run for office, volunteering to help in your Local Association is a great place to start as well.

There is no magic formula for leadership. One common factor of every leader of every organization is that they all began honing their leadership skills at the local level. They stepped forward and put themselves out there! It may seem like a daunting thing to do, but it's something you as educators have experience doing quite a lot. After all, how many people could get up in front of a room full of students without going into a panic? Not many!

I hope every member reading this realizes that they are a potential leader,

and I hope you will consider running for an office in the Association, or volunteering to help someone else who has done so.

"Teamwork makes the dream work!" is a common saying, but it's also very true.

By working together since 1956, FEA members have accomplished a great deal. Several articles in this newsletter highlight accomplishments of FEA members, whether as elected officers or as leaders in the classroom and in the DoDEA community.

These accomplishments were not made FOR you, they were made BY you, and by your predecessors – many of whom may have never imagined themselves stepping into a leadership role at any level of their Association until they actually did so. We are all much better off because they did.

So be sure to vote, and please consider putting your name forward for office now or in the near future. YOU are FEA, and we need you!

President, First Lady Make Sure DoDEA Educators Are Represented During Thanksgiving Event at Fort Bragg

A few days before Thanksgiving, President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden hosted a Thanksgiving meal for the military community at Fort Bragg.

Prior to the event, the White House reached out to FEA/NEA to extend an invitation for a group of DoDEA educators to take part in the event. The educators, some with family members accompanying them, were greeted by the President and First Lady, who expressed their appreciation for the outstanding work done by DoDEA faculty and staff.

A special honor was bestowed upon Fort Bragg Association of Educators President Annitra Smith-Lincoln, who was asked to escort the President and introduce him to the group of DoDEA attendees.

Smith-Lincoln, an educator at Shughart Middle School on Fort Bragg, recounts the experience:

“It was an honor to meet Dr. Jill and President Joe Biden. Making this occasion even more memorable was being able to share it with colleagues, one of my amazing students and my 9-year old daughter.”

“I was not expecting to escort the President! When introduced to him, he said, ‘I appreciate the work all teachers do.’”

“Upon introducing him to my student and my daughter, he encouraged them to continue to do well in school. He told them that there will be a woman leading our country one day soon and to remember him when one of them becomes President.”

“I expressed to Dr. Jill Biden how much it means to have an educator in the White House and how much that representation means to DoDEA educators. Dr. Biden shared that she knew of the great work that DoDEA educators do and that she would be returning to her own classroom the following morning!”



Above: FBAE President Annitra Smith-Lincoln escorts President Joe Biden to meet with DoDEA students, educators and family members during a Thanksgiving event at Fort Bragg.



Right: A group of FEA members and leaders meet with First Lady Jill Biden during the event at Fort Bragg. The First Lady, herself an educator, specifically asked that a group of DoDEA educators be invited to the event, in recognition of their role as a part of the military community.

FEA ELECTION 2022

NOTICE OF ELECTION For Election of Executive Officers

Winter/Spring 2022

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 28, 2022.

The officers to be elected to the following positions will serve a three-year term of office commencing on August 2, 2022, as stipulated by the FEA Constitution and Bylaws:

- President
- Vice-President/Secretary-Treasurer
- Human and Civil Rights State Coordinator
- Education Support Professional (ESP) Coordinator
- NEA Director*

* The term of office for the NEA Director will commence on September 1, 2022, as stipulated by Rule 10 of the NEA Standing Rules.

These officers will be elected by the worldwide active membership.

FEA Members Will Vote To Fill Five Positions This Year

Which offices are up for election this year?

All five at-large offices on FEA's Board of Directors are to be elected. Those offices are:

- President
- Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer
- NEA Director for Federal
- Human & Civil Rights Coordinator
- Education Support Professional (ESP) Coordinator

Who are the candidates?

Biographies of all the candidates can be found on pages 5-7 of this newsletter.

How long are the terms of office and when do the newly-elected officers' terms begin?

The winner of each position is elected to a three year term on the FEA Board of Directors.

Terms for the FEA President, FEA Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer, FEA Human & Civil Rights Coordinator and FEA Education Support Professional Coordinator will begin on August 2, 2022.

Per the NEA Standing Rules, the term of the NEA Director for Federal will begin September 1, 2022.

Where is my ballot?

Ballots will be mailed individually to each FEA Active member on or before January 14, 2022. Your ballot should arrive by early February or sooner, depending on your location.

When is my ballot due back to FEA for counting?

Ballots must be received by the close of business on March 28, 2022, to be counted.

What if my ballot never arrives?

Anytime after February 15, 2022, Local Presidents, FRs 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 29 and (if necessary) 30, 2022, in Washington, DC.

How do I find out who has won?

Results will be posted on the FEA Web site within 24 hours of the tally being completed and also printed in the Spring 2022 edition of the FEA Journal.

ATTENTION FRs, 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.

FEA ELECTION 2022

MEET THE CANDIDATES

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CANDIDATE

FEA PRESIDENT

BRIAN L. CHANCE

Present Location: Zama Middle/High School, Japan

Present Assignment: Information Specialist

Years in DoDEA: 24

Locations:

- Kaiserslautern Middle School, Germany (7 years)
- Zama American High School, Japan (14 years)
- Marion County Schools, Ocala, Florida (5 years)
- Clay County Schools, Middleburg, Florida (4 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- University of Florida, M.Ed.
- University of Florida, B.A.
- School for International Training, Brattleboro Vermont/Guanajuato, Mexico
- Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, Maryland
- Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington

Awards:

- NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence – California Casualty Awardee
- Sallie Mae Teacher of the Year for Clay County Florida
- National Endowment for the Humanities Appointment to Summer Seminars

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- FEA President (3 years)
- NEA Director for FEA (6 years)
- FEA Secretary/Treasurer (3 years)
- Northeast Asia Teachers' Association (NEATA) Secretary (3 years)/Vice President (3 years)
- Education International NEA Delegate (3 appointments, 2 as Policy Delegate)
- NEA Resolutions Committee Representative (2 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson (13 years in FEA/6 years in Florida)



CANDIDATE

VICE PRESIDENT/SECRETARY TREASURER

ANITA LANG

Present Location: Lakenheath High School, United Kingdom

Present Assignment: CTE - Engineering + Teaching as a Profession

Years in DoDEA: 27

Locations:

- RAF Lakenheath (22 years)
- MCAS Iwakuni (5 years)
- Guantanamo Bay (Evacuee)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Harvard Kennedy School, Certificate in Public Policy and Leadership
- New York University, M.S., Deaf Education
- George Washington University, B.S., Biology

Awards:

- 2021-2022 NEA Global Fellowship
- 2002 DoDEA Isles District Teacher of the Year

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- NEA Director for FEA (6 years)
- NEA Executive Compensation Committee Chair (2 years)
- NEA Board Steering Chair (1 year)
- FEA District Representative- Europe West (11 years)
- FEA Secretary/Treasurer (6 years)



FEA ELECTION 2022

MEET THE CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE

NEA DIRECTOR FOR FEDERAL

STEPHEN JAMES

Present Location: Netzaberg Elementary School, Germany

Present Assignment: Teacher LImm, Special Education

Years in DoDEA: 16

Locations:

- Netzaberg Elementary School (4 years)
- Vilseck Elementary School (5 years)
- Bamberg Elementary School (3 years)
- Naples Elementary School (4 years)
- Ft. Stewart Elementary School (1 year)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Framingham State University, M.A., Educational Leadership
- Western Washington University, Special Education K-12
- Western Washington University, B.A., English

Awards:

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- Europe East Division II Representative (4 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Vilseck Elementary School (4 years)
- Faculty Representative, Vilseck Elementary School (1 year)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Bamberg Elementary School



CANDIDATE

NEA DIRECTOR FOR FEDERAL

CHAD JIMISON

Present Location: Osan Middle/High School, South Korea

Present Assignment: Educational Technologist

Years in DoDEA: 19

Locations:

- Humphreys Middle School (2 years)
- Seoul American Elementary School (3 years)
- Seoul American Middle School (6 years)
- Humphreys American Elementary School (3 years)
- Hanau American Middle School (2 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Nova Southeastern University, M.S., Educational Technology
- Georgia College & State University, B.S., Middle Grades Education

Awards:

- USFK Teacher Appreciation Award 2011
- USFK Teacher Appreciation Award 2009

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- Faculty Representative Spokesperson (2 years)
- Faculty Representative (7 years)
- NEA LGBTQ+ Cadre Trainer (9 years)
- NEA Leadership Conference (2 years)
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (8 years)
- NEA LGBTQ+ Caucus Regional Chair (4 years)



FEA ELECTION 2022

MEET THE CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COORDINATOR

MICHAEL ERIC JOHNSON

Present Location: Sollars Elementary School, Japan

Present Assignment: K-5 Strategic Math Intervention

Years in DoDEA: 17

Locations:

- Sollars Elementary School, Misawa, Japan (17 years)
- Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, Richmond County, GA (5 years)
- Greenbriar Elementary School, Columbia County, GA (3 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Regent University, Master of Divinity, Christian Formation & Spirituality
- California Coast University, Master of Education, Education Administration
- Georgia Southern University, Bachelor of Science in Education, Early Childhood

Awards:

- 2001-2002 Richmond County Teacher of the Year

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- NEATA Vice President (6 years)
- Japan Human and Civil Rights Coordinator (4 years)
- Local Faculty Representative Spokesperson (2 years)
- Local Human and Civil Rights Coordinator (2 years)
- Local Faculty Representative (5 years)

CANDIDATE

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL COORDINATOR

TERESA BROWN

Present Location: Heroes Elementary School, Camp Lejeune, United States

Present Assignment: Educational Aide/ SPED

Years in DoDEA: 22

Locations:

- Camp Lejeune (22 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Southern New Hampshire University (present)
- Mount Olive College, Associates Degree

Awards:**Offices and Committee Assignments:**

- Treasurer (2 years)
- Human and Civil Rights Coordinator (3 years)
- Vice-President (2 years)
- Building Representative (18 years)
- ESP Coordinator (1 year)

FEA Has Always Been About T

The year 2021 marks 65 years since DoD educators first banded together in defense of their students and their rights, leading to the organization that grew to become FEA.

With the various pressures of educating children, especially during a pandemic, it can be easy to forget the 'why' of union work and to see the progress our members have made, and are making, together.

In an effort to look forward by looking back, FEA spoke to past union leaders, who help put association history in perspective and share their memories and lessons from fighting for their students and each other.

FEA beginnings and early wins

Our association began 65 years ago, in 1956, when educators at DoD schools in Europe came together against a furlough that would have harmed student learning and reduced staff pay that year. After successfully pressuring Congress to find funds to prevent this furlough, these educators saw the impact of solidarity and formed the organization that we know today as the Federal Education Association.

The association expanded rapidly, gaining members in Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as Puerto Rico and Guantanamo Bay, and today thousands of members have joined forces to fight for educator dignity and quality education. Coming together resulted in big wins for FEA's educators over the years, such as securing fair salaries comparable to public schools in the USA, improving procedures for educator grievances, gaining stronger bargaining rights, and more.

The past FEA Presidents interviewed for this article indicated that, for many years, the educator relationship with management was collaborative, with both parties focused on providing quality education. Former FEA President Michael Priser commented on this dynamic he saw when he first became a DoDEA educator and FEA member in 1989:

"Our union just wanted to provide the best education of the children of military families. For a while, DODEA did a really good job at that. Management and headquarters would listen to their teachers, ask what we needed to get the job done, then they would provide us with the resources needed, and we did it." However, Priser says such willingness to listen to staff had virtually disappeared by the time he became President in 2007.

Changing relationship with management
Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, DoDEA's

actions towards educators and FEA turned antagonistic. Under poor DoDEA management, educators increasingly experienced a slew of challenges: pay irregularities; false debt collections; insufficient curriculum material and professional development; travel problems; and a lack of answers out of HR on any of these issues.

Seeing this changing relationship, former President Chuck McCarter noted "it was really hard to work with an organization that was once great, but rapidly became very anti-union and anti-employee."

As a result, the Association now spends more time on resolving these issues, in service of members, than was necessary 20 or 30 years ago.



Chuck McCarter

Solidarity and collaboration lead to wins for educators and students

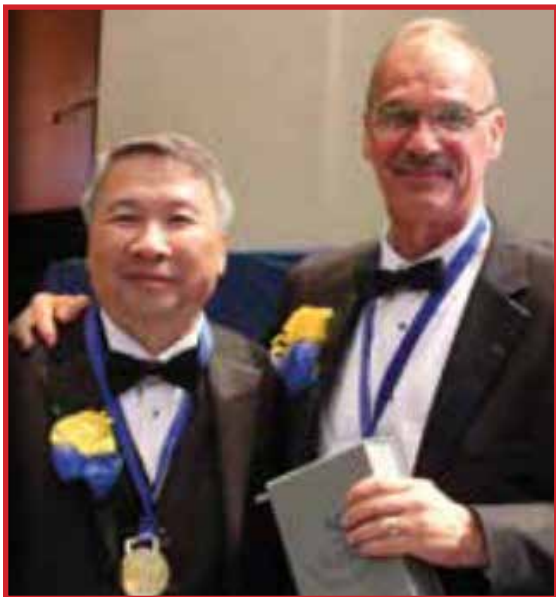
FEA members responded to these challenges by sticking together and sharing what challenges they are facing. Over the years FEA members have consistently shared their workplace concerns with their FRSs and other association leaders, and our legal teams have used this information to fight diligently for DoDEA educators.

This solidarity and collaboration prevented many harmful actions from management, but also led to big wins for educators.

Taking On Challenges Together

H.T. Nguyen, former FEA Executive Director and General Counsel, who was part of FEA's legal staff from 1984 to 2019, found that FEA wins have always been due to a collaboration between association leaders, including FRSs, and a "strong and diligent legal team fighting for educators".

FEA's greatest protections of members included: successfully fighting many times against studies proposing Stateside schools integrate with their local education agencies; fighting against Executive Orders and other actions we considered to be harmful and/



H.T. Nguyen and Michael Priser were recognized at the 2016 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards for their work on behalf of FEA to bring equal rights to same sex couples in DoDEA.

or unlawful; and stopping DODEA's 'Unified Law' attempt which would have stripped bargaining rights including the ability to bargain pay and benefits in Stateside schools.

Member solidarity has led to not only protections but victories. FEA achieved recognition for all Stateside (formerly Section 6) locals to be certified as a single, consolidated bargaining unit. Debt collection cases resulted in many false collections being paid back to members with interest. A grievance win led to the conversion of temporary employees to permanent ones and wrongfully fired educators were reinstated with about \$30 million in back pay. Recently, through several legal challenges, much progress has been made in requiring DoDEA to implement a smart and detailed Leave and Earnings Statement, so educators may find it easier to monitor their pay and benefits.

Remembering why and relying on each other

As FEA members look ahead to 2022, they continue to fight to improve DoDEA schools and working conditions, not only for themselves, but for their students. They fight because students deserve quality educations that open their minds and prepare them for adulthood. They fight because they know schools work best when management and educators work together. And they fight because educators deserve dignity in their work.

FEA advocates for DoDEA educators having a voice in how their schools and classes are run, for ensuring that schools are safe and have the necessary

resources for student learning, and for Overseas and Stateside contracts that reflect the work hard our members consistently do.

When the Journal asked Jan Mohr, FEA President from 1995-2001, how FEA educators can stay motivated considering the challenges they face, her answer was simple and straightforward:



Jan Mohr

"Firstly, remember that you are doing the important work of teaching the children of service members. That's first and foremost and can help educators stay motivated despite problems with management. Members also need to rely on their association and fellow members. If they know something is not working and needs to be reported, educators need to go to their FRS immediately so they can work it up the chain and help it get resolved. That's what the association is there for."

Educators and their students need a voice to speak up against management missteps and to ensure basic rights are protected. For 65 years, FEA has fulfilled that role. With the ongoing support of our members, we hope to continue doing so for another 65 years, and beyond.

Student Loan Forgiveness Program Sees Much-Needed Improvements

In great news for many educators with student loans, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) recently announced a change to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program rules for a limited time, allowing many borrowers to receive credit for past payments made on loans that would otherwise not qualify for PSLF.

Some 550,000 public service workers will be automatically credited on average nearly 23 payments that have been previously denied, with many more borrowers eligible for forgiveness.

The PSLF program, which began in 2007, provides student loan forgiveness to those who work in public service careers, including government employees like DoDEA employees/FEA members.

Under that program, those who work in public service that make 120 qualifying federal student loan payments, or 10 years' worth of payments, and meet other very specific conditions, should have been granted forgiveness for their remaining balance of their federal student loan.

A Broken Program

PSLF, however, has been viewed by many as broken and has, until now, resulted in 98% of applicants getting denied for forgiveness.

Many borrowers seeking forgiveness were denied because they had the wrong type of loan, payment plan, loan servicer, or clerical errors due to servicer malfeasance.

Many borrowers have Perkins and Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) instead of Direct Loans, which are required in order to qualify for the program. Under the prior system, an educator could make 120 payments on their FFEL or Perkins loan and *none* of those payments counted toward forgiveness. Many educators were unaware of this until they applied for forgiveness, only to be told that they have *another* 10 years to pay.

Long-Sought Improvements

The overhaul announced in early October addresses several of these problems and could potentially transform many educators' lives:

- *Previous payments made to FFEL and Perkins loans will now count toward the 120.*
- *Previous payments made outside of Income-Driven repayment plans will count.*
- *The Department of Education will now take a liberal definition of payment and will now credit some late payments and payments that were off by a few cents.*

This change will apply to student loan borrowers with Direct Loans, those who have already consolidated into the Direct Loan Program, and those who consolidate into the Direct Loan Program by Oct. 31, 2022. For more information, view the DOE announcement here: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/pslf-limited-waiver>

Benefit to Federal Workers

DoDEA educators, as federal employees, will receive automatic credit due to data matches between agencies. While this will occur automatically, it won't happen immediately.

However, FEA educators with less than 10 years of service, who have FFEL or Perkins loans, will still need

to consolidate their loans to maintain their eligibility and continue to be on track in receiving PSLF.

The data matching through this temporary waiver only provides retroactive credit to previous payments, not future payments moving forward.

Loans forgiven through the PSLF will not be considered as taxable income.

View the NEA's PSLF Reform Debrief and the NEA virtual town hall with ED Secretary Cardona here: <https://www.nea.org/your-rights-workplace/fair-pay-benefits/student-debt-support>.

Suggested Actions

FEA recommends members who this affects do three things as soon as possible:

- Visit <https://studentaid.gov/pslff/>, login with your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID and make sure your contact information is correct because the Federal Student Aid office may start communicating with you directly.
- Visit <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/pslf-limited-waiver> and see what steps, if any, you need to complete to get forgiveness.
- Get free assistance from Savi, a service that assists with options to manage student debt. All NEA members receive one year of free access. Learn more at neamb.com/GetNavNEA

Please make sure to follow the instructions set by the ED and take all necessary steps before the October 2022 deadline.

FEA is thankful for the NEA in their relentless efforts fighting for educators on this issue. Whether by contacting members of Congress or leaders in multiple administrations, NEA showed they knew how important the promise of debt forgiveness was to members and how much they needed relief.

Member Has Over \$60K In Student Loans Forgiven

Due to the recent reforms of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program (see page 10), an FEA member in Germany recently had over \$60,000 in student loans forgiven.

The member was one of the thousands of applicants who were repeatedly denied forgiveness over the years, whether due to having the wrong loan, payment plan, or some other technicality. The member had been trying to get forgiveness for over ten years:

“It was a constant battle. I had payments stuck in “review” for years. I had payments denied or turned into partial payments. I even had to contact my congressman to get help. Even then not all my payments were counted, without explanation.”

However, this October, the Department of Education reformed the PSLF program, allowing many borrowers to receive credit for past payments made on loans that would otherwise not qualify for PSLF. The changes to the PSLF program came about in large part due to lobbying efforts by NEA. After the changes were implemented, the member shared their good news with FEA:

“I instantly received loan forgiveness. I received a message that all my past payments were now accepted and my debt was erased. I feel like a huge weight is off my shoulders. It is rather surreal. For a large part of my life I lived with that albatross, and now it’s over. I want to thank FEA and NEA for their help and lobbying for this reform”.

The member also has advice for other members with loans: “I would suggest that everyone keep hard copies of everything. I was asked several times for “proof” during the process. Certify often. I certified my employment every year and followed up with emails for confirmation. I kept careful track of all my payments, accepted or not. Also, when my loan was transferred to FedLoan, they claimed to have lost many of my payments. So, everyone should get all their information together and make copies.”

Stateside News

FLRA To Issue ULP Complaint Against DoDEA Over Changes To Schedule In Southeast District

(reprinted from the FEA-SR update)

Last spring, management announced unilateral changes to the Southeast District schedule that imposed new hardships for educators who were forced to adjust their work hours for the second time in two years. On June 4, 2021, FEA-SR sent DoDEA notice of its intent to file an unfair labor practice (ULP) charge with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) unless DoDEA put the new schedule in abeyance and bargained the change. Receiving no response from management, FEA-SR filed a ULP charge on June 22, 2021.

After the FLRA’s Atlanta Regional Office investigated the charge, the Regional Director agreed with FEA-SR that DoDEA violated the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute by unilaterally implementing the change. FEA-SR was recently informed that the FLRA has decided to issue a complaint against DoDEA unless the parties are able to resolve the matter through a settlement agreement. Should a complaint be issued, the matter will be referred to FLRA General Counsel to prosecute the charge before an administrative law judge. FEA-SR expects that it will take some time until a hearing is scheduled. However, this news is a major step toward holding management accountable for blatantly disregarding its bargaining obligations.

FEA-SR Wins Pair of Reinstatement Cases for Members

An ESP received a recent win when an arbitrator returned a school secretary to duty after she was removed for failure to follow a letter of requirement and inattention to duty. The secretary had been ill, and her principal placed her on the letter of requirement with conditions that were almost impossible for her to meet. For the inattention to duty, the Agency claimed the secretary made errors on timecards when the secretary was only one of several people who were working on the timecards. The arbitrator stated the Agency had not proven the charges by a preponderance of the evidence.

An educator was recently given her job back as a teacher after being placed in a teacher’s aide position. The Agency listed several charges and specifications against the member, with some charges alleging behavior that had occurred 6 months before the proposed adverse action and other charges were based on the teacher’s failure to perform tasks she was not required to perform. The arbitrator determined the Agency had not proven any of the charges against the member and did not have just cause to change her position from teacher to aide.

Educator Makes Students Lifelong Learners with Impactful Lessons

Educators are constantly challenged to teach students in ways they find memorable and engaging. In an age of digital distraction and periodic remote learning, this task is even more difficult.

However, one DoDEA educator and FEA member in Japan, Jami LeFebre, looks for any opportunity to make lessons more interactive and memorable for her students.

Whether she has her students interview veterans or build bird feeders to observe nature, LeFebre is able to create engaging lessons that inspire a passion for learning.

LeFebre, a fourth-grade teacher at Arnn Elementary, believes that interactive, hands-on experiences help students make greater connections, which increase student learning.

On November 10, the day before Veterans Day, she had her students interview U.S. veterans on their experiences in the military. Students took turns asking questions to the veterans seated with them, learned about the roles in which they served, where they were stationed, and their favorite memories from the service.

She noted how the students “seemed so interested in what the veterans were saying, and they really seemed to enjoy the interview process”. “They were really engaged in listening, and I think their questions went beyond what was originally asked of them,” she said. Several students expressed they felt a greater appreciation for both veterans and Veterans Day.

LeFebre describes her teaching style as hands-on and highly applicable to real life:

“I like to provide as many opportunities as possible for students to remember our lessons. Impactful learning is the best way to make life-long learners. Students won’t remember worksheets or standardized tests, but they will

remember these veterans and other opportunities I enjoy putting together for them”, she said.

This wasn’t the first time LeFebre created engaging activities for her students. For their unit on observing nature, her students built a bird feeder. Before Thanksgiving, she had them make butter “the old-fashioned way”. To teach students about the democratic process, she had each student make a map of the local base then vote together on their favorite one. While teaching about migration to the American West, LeFebre had students build an outdoor ‘Oregon Trail’ with shoeboxes and signs, then they discussed what the settlers would have experienced on their journeys.

LeFebre is an example of how educators consistently go above and beyond to inspire their students and create a passion for learning. Her creative and interactive approach to teaching exemplifies how public education can be truly life-changing for children, and how educators deserve dignity in their profession.



Jami LeFebre

March 2nd Is Closer Than You Think! Are YOU Ready to Read?

Got Your Reading Event Planned Yet?

*March 2, 2022, Is
NEA's Read Across
America Day!*

*“You’re never too old,
too wacky, too wild,
to pick up a book
and read with a child.”*



Don't wait to plan your reading event!

NEA's Read Across America site has tons of online materials you can use to plan and promote your **Read Across America activities.**

Visit readacrossamerica.org to find artwork, samples of proclamations and press releases, and lots of other useful resources.

Be sure to send FEA photos and details from your Read Across America events. Please send them to us at fea@feaonline.org

Good Deed On Guam



Guam Education Association President Denise Sheedy (left) poses with Lori Marsh Marble, Director of the Be Heartfelt nonprofit on Guam. At the start of this school year, GEA organized a shoe drive to help children in need on the island. The members donated over 200 pairs of new and gently-used shoes to Be Heartfelt for the effort.



NEA Mental Health Program

Rethink how you manage your mental health. Get clinically-validated tools for stress, anxiety, depression, or whatever you're going through.



Share    

We could all use some mental health support, now more than ever. The NEA Mental Health Program, in partnership with Scavello, gives you access to clinically-validated tools for stress, anxiety, depression, or whatever you're going through.

neamb.com/products/nea-mental-health-program

Retired Member Norma Sanders: A Career of Fighting for Others

FEA members dedicate their careers to educating the children of military families around the world, but often don't have their own stories told.

During her forty-two years as an educator, FEA-Retired member Norma J. Sanders taught multiple grade levels in multiple states and countries, served in many FEA leadership roles, and helped unionize Stateside schools. Inspired by her parents and the civil rights movement of the 1960s, she exemplifies FEA members' dedication and passion for their profession.

Sanders grew up in Montgomery, Alabama, as one of eight children. While her parents were not able to complete their educational dreams, they always stressed to their children how education could positively impact their lives. She recalled: "This was my driving force to become an educator: to ensure each child would be able to fulfill their educational dreams."

Sanders also found a passion for activism and social justice at an early age. As a young child, she and her friends participated in 1965's Selma to Montgomery March, a protest to end segregation and secure voting rights for Black Americans. This event inspired her to fight for others whenever she could.

"As a 'Foot Solider' of the March, I have always tried to use my voice to fight for others," Sanders said, "whether pursuing better working conditions, accepting cultural differences, or advancing human and civil rights issues."

Sanders dedicated her career to education, earning degrees in Early Childhood and Special Education from Alabama State then Tuskegee University. She would go

on to teach in Alabama, Louisiana, California, Italy, and finally North Carolina. Over her career, she taught multiple subjects, ranging from kindergarten to college

courses, and always aimed to inspire a lifelong love of learning in her students, just as her parents had done for her.

She also saw the need for educator representation in DoDEA Stateside schools, which could give voice to educators who have concerns and change their working conditions for the better. Continuing her passion for life-long civil rights and solidarity, she became one of the grassroots organizers in the effort to organize DoDEA Stateside teachers in the early 1990s,

helping lead to the establishment of FEA-Stateside as a bargaining unit.

Sanders would serve in many FEA roles: Vice President of her local association on multiple occasions; FRS; a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force for HCR; and HCR for her school's educators, giving them a voice and promoting diversity and understanding. She notes how important this training was for teachers who often lived abroad: "We were able to train individuals on understanding and respect of cultural differences, regardless of where they were in the world."

While Sanders retired from DoDEA in 2019, she stays busy with her new roles as lobbyist with Community Change Action, a member of Action, North Carolina-Tenant Organizing Resource Center, and a member of FEA-NEA Retired. She continues to use her voice to fight for others, however she can.

View more profiles of our amazing members at feonline.org/who-we-are/meet-our-members/.



Norma Sanders

FEA Retired News

How Active FEA-MEMBERS CAN GAIN A LIFETIME OF BENEFITS FROM NEA/FEA

By Michael Priser, Chuck McCarter and Trudy Pollard

So what's the difference between "**FEA-Retired**" and "**FEA-Pre-Retired**," and how does that matter to FEA-Active members currently working in our DoDEA schools?

FEA-Retired members are members of FEA/NEA, and have retired from DoDEA. Membership with **FEA-Retired** is not automatic. **FEA-Retired** requires a *one-time/life-time* membership dues payment. (Currently the dues for FEA-Retired is \$419.) Any educator who has retired from DoDEA can join **FEA-Retired**. They then have access to the retired benefits and services of FEA/NEA.

However, many FEA-members who are still employed choose to go ahead now and join **FEA-Pre-Retired**. Why is this a better option? Educators pay the one-time dues at whatever the cost is at the time they join. They will automatically become a member of **FEA-Retired** when they notify FEA of their retirement. It does not matter if FEA-Retired dues increased prior to actual retirement, they will not pay any additional fees. Many educators have joined **FEA-Pre-Retired** at a very low rate and years (and sometimes decades) later, retired and obtained all the benefits from FEA/NEA automatically.

Some members believe that being an active FEA member makes them an "**FEA-Retired** member" upon retirement. It does not. They can join after retirement and pay whatever is the prevailing dues at that



time, or they can lock in the retired dues rate now, and then everything is automatic. It will be one less thing to worry about while you are completing your OPM paperwork, cleaning out your desk and arranging to ship your car/household goods (if you reside overseas).

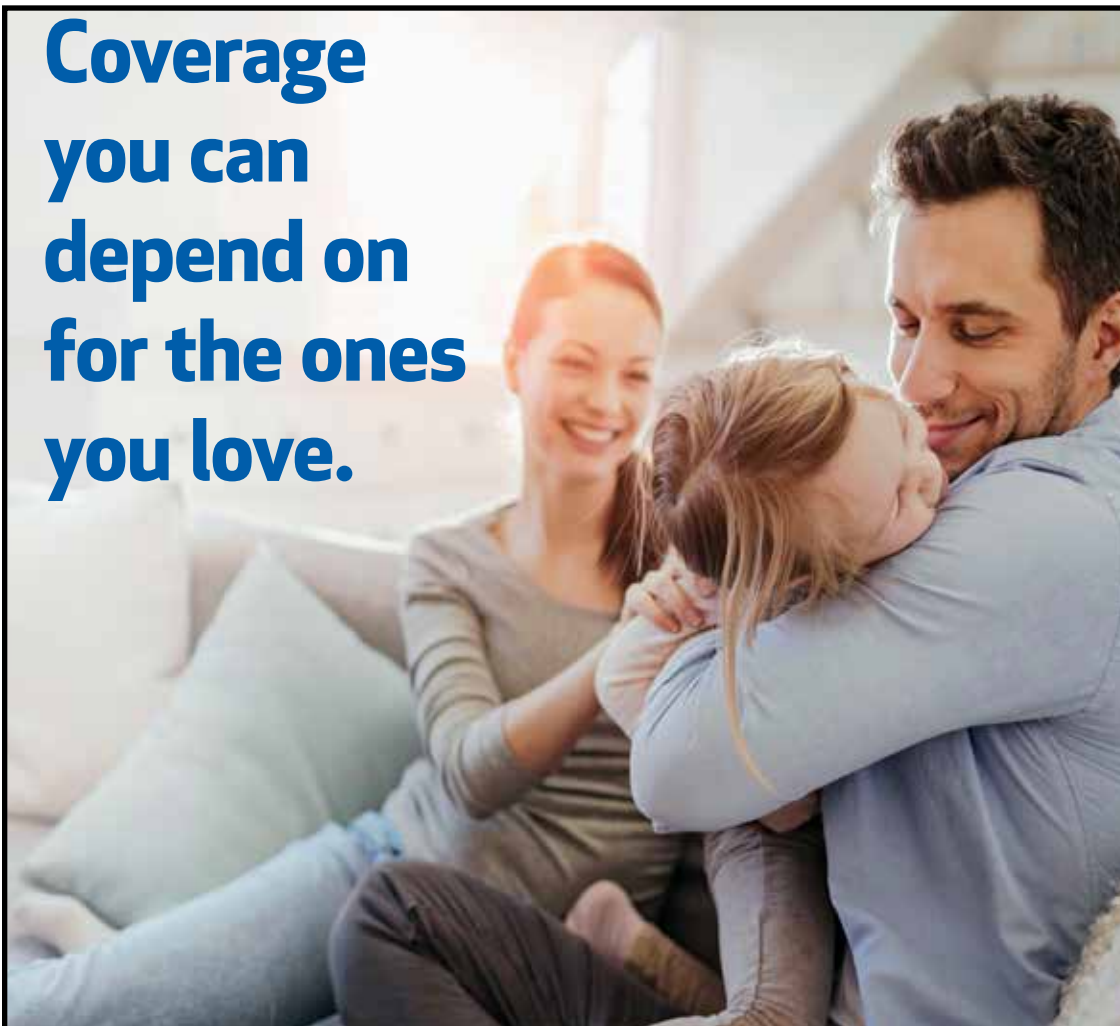
Why should I join **FEA-Pre-Retired** (other than the financial savings on the one-time dues)? Upon retirement, retired FEA members have the following benefits:

- Frequent NEA and FEA publications
- Electronic updates on educational and retirement issues
- Support from NEA government relations to safeguard Federal legislation that affects retirees, such as social security, federal pensions, and Medicare
- Access to NEA-Member Benefits, including discount programs for banking services, credit cards, life insurance, long-term care insurance, travel discounts, shopping discounts and much more.
- Retiree representation at NEA and FEA annual meetings
- Continuation of the Educator Employment Liability Coverage (should you choose to substitute teach)

For more information on how to join **FEA-Retired/FEA Pre-Retired**, see your FEA building representative or visit feasonline.org and click the "JOIN NOW" button in the upper right hand corner. Questions? Just ask, at retiredFEA@gmail.com.

If you have a suggestion for an issue affecting FEA Retired Members that you'd like to see the Association address, please send it to retiredfea@gmail.com

Coverage you can depend on for the ones you love.



As an eligible NEA member,* you've got the protection of **NEA Complimentary Life Insurance**, issued by **The Prudential Insurance Company of America** — but you should name a beneficiary to make sure your loved ones are covered. Go to neamb.com/free-tote and register your beneficiary to get this **FREE** tote. Or call **1-855-NEA-LIFE (632-5433)** and mention offer code: **TOTE BAG**

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NEA Complimentary Life Insurance is issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ.
0302614-00002-00



Visit neamb.com/protect to learn about all the solutions available to help meet your insurance needs.

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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**

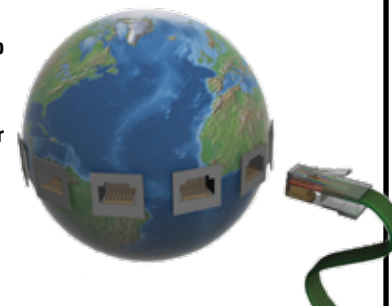
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Then dial Member Benefits at

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



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Calendar of Events

JANUARY

14
Ballots for FEA At-Large Officer elections
mailed to all Active members

17
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

21
Presidents' Day

MARCH

2
NEA's Read Across America

28
Deadline for receipt of ballots for FEA
At-Large Officer Election

FIND YOUR EDCOMMUNITIES GROUP

Where can you share, collaborate and network with educators from across FEA and across the country?
NEA360 edCommunities
Find communities of practice to expand your learning and build your skillset to help students succeed. Explore these edCommunities groups and more at MyNEA360.org

