



Inside

FEA ELECTION 2023

Find biographies of the candidates and other information on this school year's election of three Area Directors to serve on the FEA Board of Directors.

See pages 4-8 for information!

Ballots will be mailed directly to all FEA Active Members on or before January 13, 2023.

Completed ballots must be received by FEA no later than March 27, 2023, in order to be included in the election tally.

FEA Action Leads To Return Of Some EDC Funding After Cuts Overseas

After DoDEA educators Overseas informed FEA early this school year that the Agency significantly cut Extra-Duty Contracts (EDCs) and extra-curricular programs in many schools, local, Area, and Washington FEA leaders have pressed the Agency to fund the programs, leading to the return of some EDC funding.

As the school year began, many educators in the Pacific and Europe regions reported substantial cuts to EDCs in some schools, even up to 40%, which led to the apparent cancellation of several student-centered extra-curricular programs. Programs no longer offered included Robotics, STEM club, School News Liaison, Book Club, and more.

Members also reported program budget cuts were leaving students and coaches with inadequate accommodations while traveling for away sports games. In one instance, coaches had to sleep on military-style cots in the equipment room of a gym with no heating and showers with water labeled unsafe to drink. The student-

athletes slept elsewhere in the gym as temperatures neared freezing.

Additionally, educators in some locations informed FEA earlier this year they were expected to run extra-curricular programs at the start of this school year without completed EDC contracts because management had failed to issue those contracts on time. As a result, educators were left uncovered in case they got sick or injured during extra-curricular events during that time.

Since learning of these significant cuts, FEA leaders questioned management at all levels on the change and urged for the immediate and full funding of EDCs. We are receiving reports that additional EDC funds have suddenly "fallen from the sky" from the Agency and several student programs are beginning to return. If schools are still in need of EDC funding, the FRS should engage with the administrator, and if it is not resolved at that level, to engage the District/Division President.

Extra-curricular programs are crucial for students' overall growth, confidence, and ability to socialize and engage in their interests. Military-connected children, who move frequently, often rely on these programs to build connections in their new school.

It is unacceptable that extra-curricular activities are inadequately funded in a school system run by the well-funded DoDEA, which saw a budget increase from \$2 billion to over \$2.2 billion from FY 2021 to FY 2022. With this level of funding, educators should expect the Agency to fund and run these programs appropriately.

FEA urges DoDEA to commit to fully funding extra-curricular programs so students can have the best education possible. We also urge DoDEA to consistently provide EDC contracts promptly and ensure educators and students have reasonable accommodations while traveling for away games.

FEA President's Corner

Brian Chance



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@feasonline.org***

- Educator Expertise
- Contributes To Strong Student NAEP Scores

Why did our students score so well on the recent NAEP assessments?

As you may know, the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores were released, showing that while scores nationwide fell from 2019, scores for DoDEA students remained stable overall and even increased for 8th grade reading. Our students' average scale scores ranged from 15 to 23 percentage points higher than corresponding national average scores.

Congratulations to our amazing students and educators for this impressive accomplishment. DoDEA is fortunate to have outstanding educators who go above and beyond for their students every day.

To be clear, test performance is only one indicator of a student's knowledge and abilities. They do not reflect the value or potential of our students. That said, tests can indicate a general understanding of concepts, so it is worth taking a moment to understand why our students performed well.

Some leaders have mentioned how many DoDEA schools only had a few months of remote teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with other factors, DoDEA Director Tom Brady mentioned the hard work and dedication of our educators.

While hard work and in-person teaching likely played factors, I believe our educators' experience and expertise greatly contributed to our students' achievement.

Firstly, our students' recent performance is not an anomaly. Before the pandemic our students were already consistently performing better than students from other public-school systems across the United States. For example, in 2019, our 4th-graders averaged a score of 235 for reading, 16 points higher than the National Public average. Also, our educators, just like those across the U.S., were already working hard before the pandemic.

What explains the consistently strong scores? Many of our educators come to the school system with several years of experience. This accumulated knowledge and expertise enables them to adapt their teaching styles to multiple situations and student learning styles.

Additionally, our educators and their students are unique in how much they deal with change. Military-connected students tend to move residences multiple times during their childhood. As a result, they and their educators are highly accustomed to change, which likely helped educators keep their students on track despite pandemic challenges.

Another important factor in our students' scores is that our schools are relatively small compared to many schools in states across the U.S. This helps educators and support staff understand the needs of their students and coordinate the school's resources to meet them. Additionally, despite the Agency's recent efforts to increase the student-teacher ratio to be more reflective of other state systems, our schools still have one of the lowest ratios.

Student achievement on tests is determined by a range of factors. However, the pandemic demonstrated how our skilled educators and resilient students can overcome unique challenges for learning.

At a time when so many school systems are having difficulty holding onto quality educators, DoDEA should do all it can to retain our excellent teachers and staff. The accomplishments of our schools would not be possible without our dedicated staff, who are uniquely aware of the challenges faced by military dependents and their families. Management should respect our educators for the trained and experienced professionals they are and remember that quality schools and educators are crucial for student learning.





Association Business

Richard Tarr
FEA Executive Director

The Employee Grievance: A Powerful Tool For Educator Voice

For both the Overseas and Stateside contract, a grievance can generally concern any matter relating to the employment of the employee or any other employee. It can also concern a claimed breach of the collective bargaining agreement between educators and management.

Ideally, a grievance would not be necessary to resolve a problem. FEA leaders at all levels have regular meetings with DoDEA management to advocate for educators' issues and sometimes management listens, understands, and makes changes.

Unfortunately, this is not typical.

That is why the negotiated grievance procedure is crucial for our educators. It provides a legal avenue for educators and the Association to protect educator and Association rights and hold management to its commitments and obligations. As part of representing educators, FEA files grievances as it becomes necessary. It is always our hope DoDEA will change a policy that was incorrectly implemented, or reverse an

action incorrectly taken. If the Agency does not reverse course, FEA can and will take grievances to arbitration.

We have filed a number of grievances on behalf of educators, with some examples below.

In separate arbitration wins which began with grievance filings, FEA and FEA-Stateside Region won payments for members who had not been paid properly based on academic credits they had earned. While DoDEA just recently began processing claims from Stateside employees, whose case was won just a few years ago, the agency has paid out hundreds of thousands of dollars in back pay to affected Overseas employees over the past decade.

A recent grievance filed on behalf of our Overseas educators concerns the calculation of when 175 days in a pay status is fulfilled for the purpose of R T eligibility.

We have filed several grievances on the completion of mandatory annual training for educators Overseas, such as DoDEA Records Management and No Fear Act.

Generally, the Agency has changed the time to complete the training and we filed grievances on these changes.

Individual employees have the right to file grievances to protect their rights and can get help from FEA UniServs, who do an amazing job of fighting for educators in this capacity. The FEA Washington Legal Department is regularly in contact with our Stateside and Overseas UniServ attorneys and we work as a team to assess legal issues and protect your rights through the negotiated grievance procedures.

If you are an employee, either Overseas and Stateside, and believe you or fellow employees' rights are being violated, I encourage you to speak with your FRS, concerning the process of filing a grievance. Please also be sure to elevate the awareness of the issue through the FEA chain of command. If you would like to review either the Stateside MLA or Overseas Negotiated Agreement, it can be found on the FEA website: www.feaonline.org/resources/contracts/.

**Get all the
latest news on
issues affecting FEA
members by
regularly visiting
FEA's Web site at
feanonline.org**

**You can also follow us on
Facebook or Twitter
@FedEdAssoc**

FEA ELECTION 2023

NOTICE OF ELECTION For Election of Executive Officers

Winter/Spring 2023

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 27, 2023.

The officers to be elected to the following positions shall serve a three-year term of office commencing on August 2, 2023, 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.

Europe, Pacific, and Stateside Members Will Elect Directors

Which offices are up for election this year

Three Area Director positions on FEA's Board of Directors are to be elected. Those offices are:

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

Who are the candidates?

Biographies of all the candidates can be found on pages 5-8 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 each office will begin August 2, 2023.

Where is my ballot?

Ballots will be mailed individually to each FEA Active member on or before January 13, 2023. 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 27, 2023, to be counted.

What if my ballot never arrives?

Anytime after February 15, 2023, 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 28 and (if necessary) 29, 2023, 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 2023 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.

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR FEA DIRECTOR FOR DDESS

CANDIDATE

FEA DIRECTOR FOR DDESS

DIANE M. GIBBS

Present Location: Gordon Elementary School, Fort Bragg, NC

Present Assignment: K-5 ESOL Teacher

Years in DoDEA: 28

Locations:

- Fort Bragg, NC (18 years)
- Fort Campbell, KY (9 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Austin Peay State University, M.A. Ed-Curriculum and Instruction
- College of Charleston, B.S. Elementary Education
- Austin Peay State University, K-12 ESOL Certification
- Murray State University, K-12 Reading Specialist

Awards:

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- FEA Director for DDESS (3 years)
- Local President, Fort Bragg (5 years)
- FR/FRS, (9 years)
- RA Delegate (5 years)
- FEA State Caucus Secretary (5 years)



CANDIDATE

FEA DIRECTOR FOR DDESS

ALAN DANAHY

Present Location: C.C. Pinckney and Pierce Terrace Elementary Schools, Fort Jackson, SC

Present Assignment: K-6 Music Teacher

Years in DoDEA: 12

Locations:

- C.C. Pinckney Elementary School, Fort Jackson, SC (12 years)
- Pierce Terrace Elementary School, Fort Jackson, SC (11 years)
- North Colonie Central School District, Latham, NY (2 years)
- Capital Region Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Albany, NY (2 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Liberty University, Ed.D., Curriculum and Instruction (School Administration Add-On)
- Liberty University, Ed.S., Curriculum and Instruction
- University of South Carolina, M.M., Music Education
- University of Rochester, B.M., Performance and K-12 Music Education
- Federal Labor Relations Authority Statutory Training I and II Certificates

Awards:

- United States Army Commander's Coin for Excellence in Teaching at Fort Jackson Schools
- Scholarship from the American Federation of Musicians, Local 14

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- President, Fort Jackson Association of Educators (7 years)
- FEA-SR Website Creator and Webmaster (3 years)
- Vice President and Membership Coordinator, Fort Jackson Association of Educators (2 years)
- FRS/Building Representative, C.C. Pinckney and Pierce Terrace Elementary Schools, Fort Jackson (5 years)
- FEA-SR Representative on DoDEA Workgroups and Technical Evaluation Teams (6 years)
- FEA-SR Grievance and Bylaws Committees (3 years)
- NEA Organizing Institute (1 year)



FEA ELECTION 2023

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

CANDIDATE

FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

ANITA LANG

Present Location: Lakenheath High School,
United Kingdom

Present Assignment: CTE

Years in DoDEA: 29

Locations:

- Lakenheath, UK (24 years)
- Iwakuni, Japan (5 years)
- Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (.1 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

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

Awards:

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- NEA Director for FEA (6 years)
- Europe West Division Representative (12 years)
- FEA Secretary/Treasurer (6 years)



CANDIDATE

FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

STEPHEN JAMES

Present Location: Netzaberg Elementary
School, Germany

Present Assignment: Special Education
Teacher LIMM

Years in DoDEA: 17

Locations:

- Netzaberg Elementary School, Germany (4 years)
- Vilseck Elementary School, Germany (5 years)
- Bamberg Elementary School, Germany (3 years)
- Naples, Italy (4 years)
- Ft. Stewart Elementary School, Ft. Stewart, GA (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 District Division II Representative (4 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Vilseck Elementary School (4 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson, Bamberg Elementary School (1 year)



FEA ELECTION 2023

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

CANDIDATE

FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

NANCY ALMENDRAS

Present Location: Wiesbaden High School,
Germany

Present Assignment: ELA II, 12 AP LIT AP
LANG

Years in DoDEA: 43

Locations:

- Yokosuka, Japan (8 years)
- Subic Base, Philippines (4 years)
- Okinawa, Japan (11 years)
- Wiesbaden, Germany (19 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- Cal State College, Bakersfield, B.A. German English
- Heidelberg University
- San Diego University

Awards:

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- Division Representative: Okinawa, Kaiserslautern II, Heidelberg (11 years)
- Kubasaki, WHS FRS (14 years)
- WEA President (1 year)
- Delegate to NEA-RA (10 years)
- NEA National Diversity Cadre (3 years)
- Secretary AEAO/WEA (27 years)
- NEA Leadership Conference (1 year)



CANDIDATE

FEA EUROPE AREA DIRECTOR

WILLIAM BUCKLEY

Present Location: Ramstein Intermediate
School, Germany

Present Assignment: 3rd Grade

Years in DoDEA: 15

Locations:

- Ramstein AB, Germany (15 years)
- Misawa AB, Japan (1 year)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- University of Phoenix, Educational Leadership
- University of Phoenix, M.A. Elementary Education
- Wayland Baptist University, B.S. Occupational Education

Awards:

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- Europe East Division 1 Representative (3 years)
- Kaiserslautern Area Education Association (KAEA) President (3 years)
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson (5 years)
- Faculty Representative (3 years)
- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate (2 years)



FEA ELECTION 2023

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR FEA PACIFIC AREA DIRECTOR

CANDIDATE

FEA PACIFIC AREA DIRECTOR

JAMES M. "MIKE" ADAIR

Present Location: Nile C. Kinnick High School, Japan

Present Assignment: CTE

Years in DoDEA: 19

Locations:

- Nile C. Kinnick High School (16 years)
- Yokosuka Middle School (3 years)
- Aoba-Japan International School (3 years)
- United States Navy (23 years)

Universities, Degrees, Certificates:

- University of Oklahoma, M.S.
- California State University, Dominguez Hills, M.A.
- University of Maryland, B.A.

Awards:

- Five (5) "Plus- 1" Membership Awards
- VFW Post Yokosuka Teacher of the Year

Offices and Committee Assignments:

- FEA Vice President (3 years)
- NEATA President (5 years)
- NEATA Vice President (7 years)
- FRS Nile C. Kinnick HS (8 years)
- RA Delegate (9 years)



Errors In Retirement Calculations Affecting Many DOD Employees

This November DoDEA employees were informed that, due to a programming error found within the Defense Civilian Payroll System (DCPS), retirement contributions (from employees and employer) were miscalculated for some employees across all DoD Agencies and Activities.

DoDEA later informed some employees about miscalculations for Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) contributions, but then stated these FEGLI miscalculations were in fact also retirement miscalculations.

It is FEA's understanding that many, if not all, DoDEA employees were notified of this general system error, while other employees have also been notified of an error specific to them. These miscalculations are resulting in employees being issued either a refund or debt letter.

FEA compiled information that DoDEA sent on these debts and refunds here: www.feaonline.org/key-information-on-dodeas-miscalculation-of-employee-retirement-contributions/

The Association is calling for DoDEA to provide clear guidance to all employees. As additional information on this issue becomes available, FEA will add that information to the above-referenced Web page so affected members and retirees should check back often.

FEA continues to press for pay fixes to systemic pay problems affecting past and present employees.

FEA provides members a folder they can use to keep copies of professional records such as LESs and correspondence from management. The folders are sent to FRSS at the start of each school year for distribution to members.

MAINTAIN YOUR PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

FILE CONTENTS

At a minimum, the Association recommends you keep the following documents and materials handy:

- All Leave and Earnings Statements you receive (copies of your LESs from the previous 12 months can be obtained at <https://mmpag.dfas.mil>)
- All SF 50 forms (Notification of Personnel Action) you receive (ask your personnel office for a copy of your SF 50 if you do not already have one)
- All LQA (Living Quarters Allowance) reconciliation paperwork, if you are an Overseas employee
- All Forms SF 1190 (Foreign Allowances Application, Grant and Report), which are used for LQA and Post Allowances
- Any other documents or emails related to how Overseas allowance and benefit amounts were determined
- Documentation of any financial awards you've received

All employees are encouraged to check their LES regularly for any errors or discrepancies you may find. Your daily rate should be consistent throughout the school year. Also make sure your health insurance is being properly deducted and your accrued leave is being properly credited.

The Association recommends you use this file to have on hand important documents in the event you ever need them for a pay grievance or to fight a false debt obligation.

You should develop the habit of retaining in this file any documents/materials related to your pay and allowances, going back as far as you can in your career.

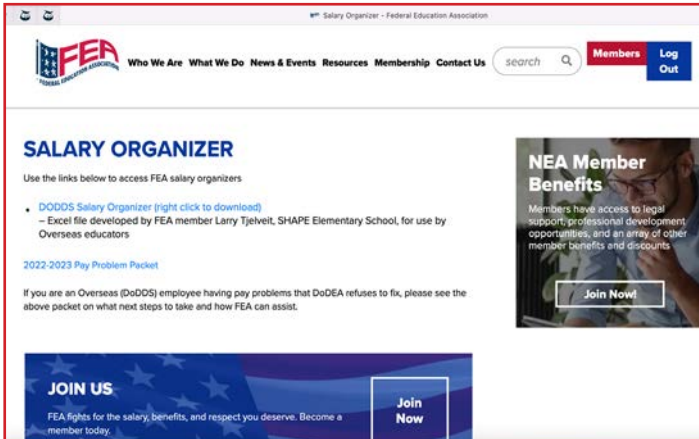
Other documents/information you should hold in this folder or keep handy elsewhere include:

- Your letter/notice of employment/employment agreement
- Teaching certificate/vocational license and certification
- Recertification records, including transcripts of all credits and degrees earned
- All ratings and evaluations you receive
- Records of any leave you take
- Any correspondence/memos to or from your administrator or supervisor
- Documentation of awards, commendations, recognitions
- Your written record of any incidents involving or witnessed by you that may affect your liability or could result in action being taken against you or others
- Any other documents/records pertaining to your employment received throughout the school year



Take Advantage of Association-Provided Materials To Help Keep Track Of Your Pay

Pay problems continue to plague DoDEA employees, despite FEA's ongoing calls for improvements to the systems used by the Agency to calculate and track pay and benefits. While the responsibility for providing timely and accurate pay rests solely with DoDEA and the Pentagon, FEA provides members with materials they can use to track their pay and watch for irregularities.



The FEA Web site includes a salary organizer and information packet for Overseas members suffering from pay problems. Members can access this information at feaonline.org/salary-organizer/

FEA and NEA Annual Meetings To Be Held In Orlando Summer 2023

FEA's Annual Membership Meeting will take place June 30 and July 1, 2023 at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista.

The FEA meeting is open to all FEA members, Active or Retired, and offer an opportunity for members to hear directly from Association leaders and staff on issues affecting them. Members interested in attending the FEA Annual Membership Meeting are asked to send a message to fea@feaonline.org to help us ensure adequate space and seating for those attending.

FEA's annual gathering takes place just prior to the NEA Representative Assembly, to be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando July 2-6, 2023. The NEA-RA sees delegates from every NEA state affiliate vote on policies and business items that guide NEA actions, as well as vote on NEA officers to lead the Association.

FEA members have the opportunity each year to run for election as a delegate to the NEA-RA. Check with your FEA Area or Local Association leadership for information on how to do so.



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

Got Your Reading
Event Planned Yet?

*March 2, 2023, 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."*

Read
across
America

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Celebrating A Nation Of Diverse Readers

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

Understanding Information Requests And How To Make Them

By Suzanne Summerlin, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel

In light of several recent wins by the FEA legal team, enforcing our union members' right to critical workplace information from DoDEA is more important than ever.

This article will outline the union's right to information from the agency, as well as provide tips for our local and regional leaders to write information requests that are more likely to be enforced by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA).

UNDERSTANDING DoDEA's OBLIGATION

Under statute (5 U.S.C. 7114), DoDEA's duty to bargain in good faith with FEA includes an obligation to provide, upon request, data that is normally maintained in the regular course of business and reasonably available and necessary for full and proper discussion, understanding, and negotiation of collective bargaining subjects.

FEA's right to information extends not only to that which is required for the negotiation of agreements, but also information necessary to investigate, evaluate, or pursue any grievance or *potential* grievance.

The full range of union representational responsibilities under the Statute also includes enforcing or administering a contract or MOU, and representing employees in response to a discipline, or proposal for discipline. In fact, in the litigation of grievances at arbitration, data and information collected in the beginning of the process can make or break a case.

FEA advises local leaders and representatives to employ information requests as often as necessary to effectively represent our members.

However, the Statute does not require that guidance, advice, counsel, or training provided for management officials or supervisors, relating to bargaining be shared with FEA. Private information, like the home addresses of coworkers, are specifically excluded by the Privacy Act and may not be lawfully shared.

Unlike a Freedom of Information Act request (FOIA request), the agency's obligation to provide information to the union must be fulfilled without cost to the union.

WRITING INFORMATION REQUESTS

An agency's failure to respond to a proper information request by the union is considered an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP). An agency may face legal consequences for committing a ULP, including the posting of notices you may have seen on your school campus, where the agency must admit publicly it has violated the law.

Writing a proper information request is key to enforcing the union's rights with the FLRA.

To write a proper information request, the union leader must

- (1) Tell the agency what the union wants;
- (2) Tell the agency why it wants that information; and
- (3) Tell the agency what the union intends to do with the information.

For example a request for information to evaluate whether the union should file a grievance over a disciplinary case may read:

"Union is requesting the Agency provide names of all similarly situated employees, and copies of all disciplinary and adverse action files on such employees, irrespective of bargaining unit, charged with [the same offense] including all the charges alleged, actions taken, and the pay grades of each individual. The Union is investigating a potential grievance pursuant to the collectively bargained agreement, and other applicable policies, rules, and statutes. The Union will use the information furnished in its exclusive representation duties including evaluating whether to file a grievance or take other representational actions."

The FLRA does not enforce information requests that are too broad, or appear to be "fishing expedition" so a

proper information request should be tailored to the specific information sought.

When requesting data, the union leader must further document the particular time period requested, and the particular geographic area that the request concerns (if any; if none exist, it would be prudent to say so in the request).

An example of a particularly tailored request may read: *"The Union seeks data relevant to employees in the FEA bargaining unit, from the time periods of October 1, 2021 to the date of this request. This information is reasonable and necessary to accomplish FEA's representational duties, specifically investigating, filing, and processing potential grievances and unfair labor practice charges."*

The FLRA provides an information request template that is a good starting point for any information request. However, the law does not specify that a union representative must use any particular form or format. Even oral requests for information are valid, but it is FEA's recommended practice to follow up any oral requests for information with a request in writing. A written request for information should also include a date by which the union requests a response (30 days is a standard time period, but that may be shortened or lengthened as circumstances require).

WHEN INFORMATION REQUESTS ARE DENIED OR THE AGENCY FAILS TO RESPOND

Just as FEA is responsible for making sure it fulfills all of its duties when requesting information, DoDEA must fulfill its own duties in responding to that information request. If you have submitted a request for information, and the agency fails to respond or responds denying your request, immediately contact your next in command up to and including your FEA Area UniServ attorneys. It may be necessary to file an Unfair Labor Practice charge to compel the agency to provide the required information.

Education Secretary Appoints FEA Member to Board Overseeing Nation's Report Card

On October 14th, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona appointed Michael A. Pope, an FEA member who teaches eighth-grade science at Zama American Middle School at Camp Zama in Japan, to a four-year term on the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the country's only ongoing, nationally representative assessment of student achievement.

The governing Board is a nonpartisan body charged by Congress to oversee and set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card. NAEP provides objective information on student performance in various subjects and reports on student achievement across the nation, in states, and in select large urban districts.

The 26-member board identifies subjects to be tested, determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment, and is responsible for communicating results to a wide range of audiences.

Pope has taught at Zama since 2006 and served as the gifted education and AVID coordinator and the Junior Science

and Humanities Symposium sponsor for middle and high school student researchers.

Over his 24-year career, he has received several awards, including the 2021 Pacific East District Teacher of the Year. He shared what this opportunity to serve on the National Assessment Governing Board means to him:

"Student advocacy and giving a voice to the military-connected students is near and dear to my heart. Being the first oDEA educator appointee to the National Assessment Governing Board means a lot to me in my career and my personal life. The appointment means that I will have part in policy discussions on ways to improve student achievement. It means being involved in educational policy at the highest level and working to positively impact the lives of all students, both stateside and abroad."



Michael Pope

PACIFIC MEMBER SELECTED AS 2023 RECIPIENT OF CALIFORNIA CASUALTY AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Congratulations to FEA's Pamela Tucker for being one of the 46 public school educators from across the country who will receive the prestigious California Casualty Awards for Teaching Excellence.

FEA, like all NEA state affiliates, is able to put forth one member each year for the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence. The winners selected by each state affiliate then compete for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, which will be awarded this spring in Washington, DC.

Educators are nominated for their leadership, excellence in the classroom, family and community engagement, a commitment to equity and diversity, and advocacy for the teaching profession. Tucker is a Mixed-Secondary Educator/ English Language Arts teacher at Robert D. Edgren Middle/High School at Misawa Air Base, Japan. She shared with FEA how it felt to be recognized:

"Being selected as one of 46 California Casualty Teaching Excellence Awardees is humbling. Educators are essential to bending society's arc towards a more perfect union, but we (like students) need champions. I am grateful to NEA and California Casualty for being our champions!"

FEA seeks applications from members each year to be our nominee for the NEA Foundation's California Casualty Teaching Excellence Award. Watch for information from us in the coming months about how you can submit your information for consideration as our nominee for the 2024 award.



Pamela Tucker

FORT CAMPBELL ASSOCIATION HOSTS ESP LEARNING DAY

On October 12th, Education Support Professional (ESPs) members from Fort Campbell schools participated in an ESP Learning Day focused on professional development and peer mentoring.

The event, organized by the Fort Campbell Non-Certified Education Association (FCNCEA), was attended by local ESPs, NEA staff and FEA-SR leaders, and featured a range of professional development sessions and activities.

The ESP Learning Day saw three NEA Organizational Specialists presenting unique professional development sessions.

Leading your Learners with Confidence taught strategies for effectively engaging, inspiring, and leading students in any setting. *True Colors* provided insight into a personality-identification system and how it can help educators collaborate better with both colleagues and students. *Maximizing Your Time* covered ways ESPs can manage their time at work, multi-task when needed, and set boundaries. Participants then discussed what they learned with their colleagues and how they could apply it to their ESP positions.

The Learning Day at Fort Campbell comes after a productive summer for five of FEA's Education Support Professional (ESP) leaders, who participated in NEA online trainings on how to create ESP peer mentoring programs in their schools.

Alesia Gladden, an Educational Assistant at Marshall Elementary School and President of FCNCEA, who took the lead in organizing the peer mentoring event, described her motivation and experience:

"I knew the ESPs in our district could use the opportunity to connect with their colleagues and keep growing in their careers. After completing NEA's training on how to create an ESP peer mentoring program, I was excited to get the ball rolling for Fort Campbell ESPs.

"The event, from planning to execution, was truly a team effort. The district superintendent and school principal helped us get our event approved, the school's tech staff were

crucial for event logistics, NEA staff provided excellent training, and our ESPs came ready and excited. A big thank you to Windie Kehn, Vice President of FCNCEA, for all her help as well. We all worked as a team to put on this event for our ESPs.

"Many attendees told me they greatly enjoyed the event and are looking forward to more events soon. I am hopeful the strategies presented by NEA staff will inspire our ESPs to share their own knowledge with their colleagues in future events. I am thrilled I could be a part of this day for our ESPs and am working with other ESP leaders to share what



Fort Campbell Non-Certified Education Association members stop for a group photo during a professional development activity at their ESP Learning Day this fall.

I've learned on hosting a Learning Day. The day reminded me of how we are stronger together."

FEA-Retired Receives NEA Organizing Grant for ESPs

NEA-Retired recently awarded FEA-Retired (FEA-R) a Membership Organizing Grant as part of the Coalition of Retired Activist and Leaders (CORAL) program being run by NEA.

This comes after FEA-Retired met with leaders from NEA-Retired and outlined a program to reach out to our ESP members.

As part of this outreach, FEA-Retired will collaborate with ESP leaders Stateside, identify the major concerns and interests of ESPs, and present to them the major benefits of FEA-Retired membership.

FEA-Retired organizer Michael Priser noted the importance of this grant for reaching out to ESP members: "Being a member of our FEA-Retired Association is so important to both active and retired educators. Just like all FEA members, our ESPs have a voice that should be heard. Together we can make a difference in being proactive in education, along with protecting Social Security, Medicare and our Federal pension and health benefits. This grant will allow us to reach out to our ESP employees, to be an inclusive organization from the day we are hired through our retirement years."

FEA Retired News

RETIRED MEMBERS TELL ACTIVE MEMBERS WHERE TO GO

By Michael Priser, FEA Retired

Often active FEA members asked FEA-Retired, “Where is the best place to retire?”

There are so many factors to consider, but often members retire to the place where they lived previously or where they have children, grandchildren or other relatives living.

The *American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)*, listed 10 factors to consider in retirement. FEA-R decided to use those factors to see how our retired members rated their “final resting place.”

In our very unscientific survey, we queried attendees to the DoDDS reunion last summer on their choice of where to live during retirement. The 10 factors were as follows, along with their average score on a 10-point scale (with 10 being the most positive score):

Cost of living	6.0
Access to nature	9.3
Availability of health care	8.7
Ease of traffic	7.2
Internet Access	7.9
Cost of housing	6.2
Air quality	8.6
Recreational activities	9.4
Low incidents of crime	8.0
Access to shopping and restaurants	9.0

Although the sample of respondents was small (about 2 dozen), it appears that most of our retired members were happy with their choices. Respondents were from places across the US such as the South (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Arkansas), the Pacific Coast (California, Oregon, Washington), the West (New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada) as well as New Hampshire.

The states that received a total of 90 points or more (out of 100) were Florida, Arkansas, North Carolina, New Hampshire, and Georgia.

The main factor that lowered scores were the cost of living and the cost of housing. It will come as no surprise that California received the lowest scores on these 2 factors.

The other factor that drew negative attention was traffic, again, in highly populated areas.

All other factors received an average score of 8 or above (out of 10 points). So, when choosing a place to live, most of our members were satisfied with their choice and when considering family needs along with the AARP criteria; they found that their “home” was also where their heart was.

JOIN FEA RETIRED

With one low payment now, you can assure yourself or one of your fellow FEA members a lifetime of access to the many benefits of Association membership.

FEA/NEA Pre-Retired Membership is open to any current member of FEA/NEA, regardless of the person’s retirement date. This membership allows an individual to enroll in the FEA/NEA retirement program, prior to actual retirement, for a one-time-only payment.

Retired memberships take effect once you have retired from DoDEA. Members must continue to pay annual FEA/NEA Active Member dues until the time of their retirement.

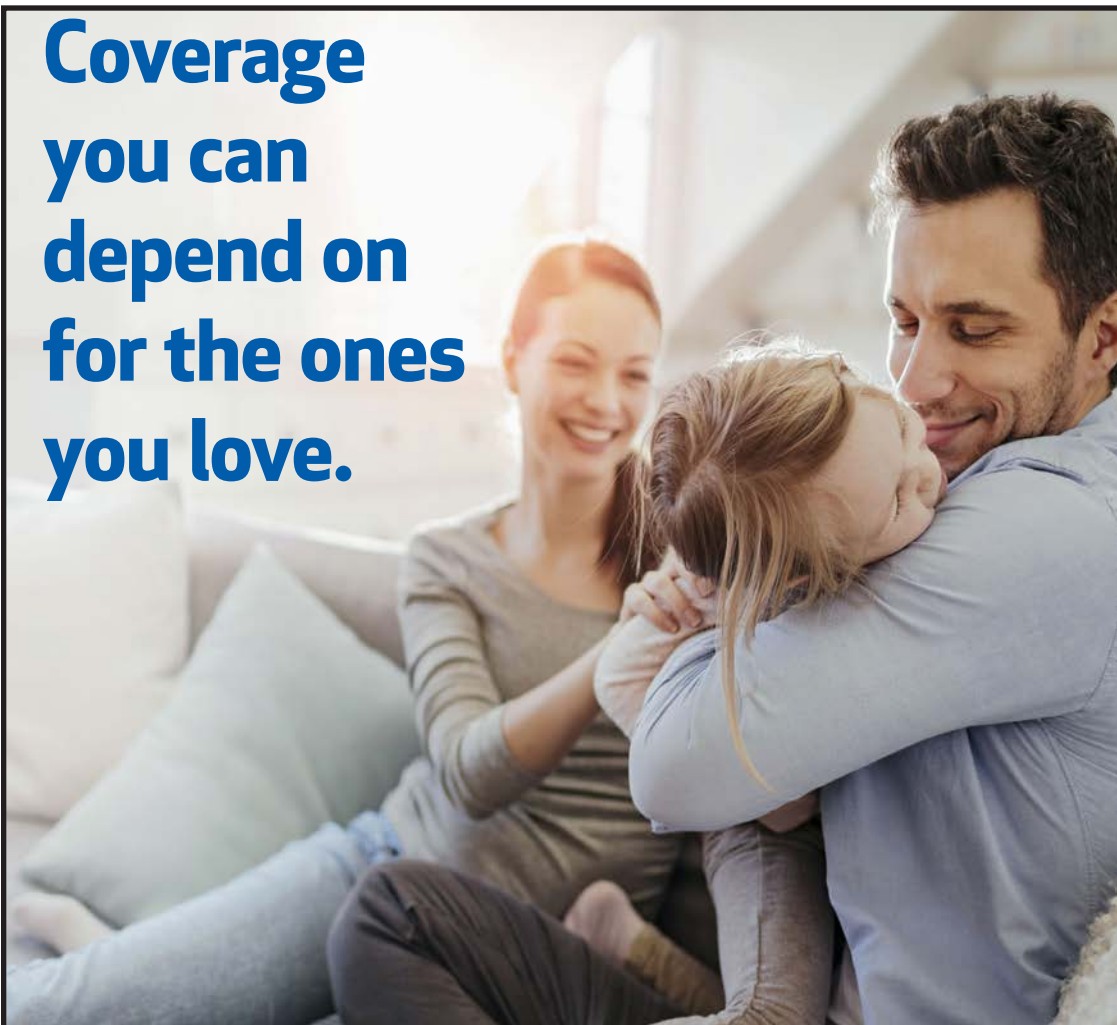
As an FEA/NEA Retired member, you will be able to retain access in your retirement to the many Member Benefit programs for retired members, including various financial insurance and investment programs. You will also continue to receive FEA and NEA publications. And, if you decide to substitute teaching after your retirement from DoDEA, you will continue to be covered by NEA’s liability insurance.

Completing your Pre-Retired Membership is easy.

Go to www.feaonline.org/retired-and-pre-retired-membership/ and follow the link for Pre-Retired Membership. You can purchase the membership for yourself or any other FEA/NEA Member.

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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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

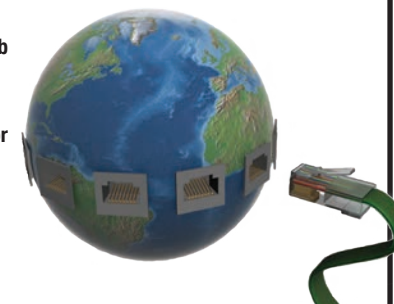
In **Japan**
00539-111

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



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Calendar of Events

JANUARY

13 Ballots for FEA Area Director elections mailed to all Active members

16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

20 Presidents' Day

MARCH

2 NEA's Read Across America

27 Deadline for receipt of ballots for FEA Area Director 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

