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## ESP Locals Boosting Learning and Leadership

Utilizing resources from all levels of the Association, Education Support Professionals in FEA-Stateside Region are showing their fellow members – in FEA and in other states – the power of engagement and organizing.

There are ESP Local Associations at six locations in the Stateside Region: Fort Campbell, Fort Knox, Fort Stewart, Camp Lejeune, West Point and Guam.

In the past few years, representatives from all these locals have attended one or more NEA trainings on leadership or ESP professional development, either in person or online.

Those ESP locals are utilizing the training they've received by creating programs at their respective locations.

Peer mentoring was among the first programs implemented. The Fort Campbell Non-Certified Education Association (FCNCEA) held its first ESP Learning Day in the fall of 2022 and held a second, larger event in August 2023.

The ESP Learning Days trained Fort Campbell employees in tactics they can use to better engage and motivate students, to improve their time management skills, and to recognize and understand different personality types among students and colleagues, with an eye toward improving collaboration.

The first ESP Learning Day was so successful, FCNCEA leaders were invited to present a session at the 2023 NEA ESP Conference to help ESP Locals throughout NEA learn how to stage their own Learning Day events.

After holding their second successful ESP Learning Day at the start of this school year, Fort Campbell ESPs are working with FEA ESP Coordinator Teresa Brown to help the ESP locals at Fort Stewart, Fort Knox and Camp Lejeune develop their own Learning Day programs.

"The Fort Campbell Learning Day was for all ESPs, not just Association members, helping them and giving them tools they can use in and out of the classroom," says Brown, an ESP at Camp Lejeune, adding that Campbell hopes to stage another Learning Day later this school year and have multiple Learning Days every year going forward.

Brown's role as ESP Coordinator was created by FEA members in 2021 as an office on the FEA Board of Directors, recognizing the unique – and too often under-appreciated – role ESPs play in DoDEA schools. ESPs have their own bargaining unit within FEA's Stateside Region.

NEA has been instrumental in helping to develop the ESP locals within FEA as well, providing multiple

grants to help in revitalization efforts and also providing staff to conduct trainings at ESP locals.

"Campbell is doing team building with NEA; a series of trainings done in person, after duty hours," Brown explains. The goal of that training is to increase capacity in locals by developing more leaders within the ranks of FEA's membership.

"Building leadership is a big goal because we need to have people ready to step into leadership roles," Brown says. "We find people will step up if they know they have support from the Association."

Brown has attended virtual meetings with each ESP local to hear from members and attended the most recent Fort Campbell Team Building session in early December. She and FCNCEA President Alesia Gladden are working with the locals at West Point and Guam to strengthen their leadership capacity and membership organizing. Brown and Gladden will be traveling to Guam in January to work with and educate the leaders and members there about the Association and all that it offers.

"Each ESP local is unique, with their own strengths and needs," Brown says. "We're working to lift them all up and provide examples that can be used by all locals throughout FEA to improve members' work lives and their experiences with the Association."

# 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@feaonline.org](mailto:fea@feaonline.org)***

## Solidarity and Purpose In Turbulent Times

We live and work in turbulent times, especially for DoDEA educators. However, we can take on the challenges of today by finding solidarity with our colleagues, being active FEA members, and preparing the next generation to take on the challenges they will face.

Only four years into this decade, we have seen one crisis after the other: educating through a global pandemic, dealing with related student learning loss, the drastic loss of healthcare for civilians in Japan, an educator shortage, and now sustained fears of a government shutdown. These are on top of the growing threat of climate change, wars abroad, and the continued issues with DoDEA mismanagement.

Despite these challenges, our educators use their expertise to guide our students to academic excellence, as the latter have consistently led the nation in standardized testing scores for decades now. Our schools are the best because DoDEA educators are experienced, dedicated, and resilient.

That said, even the best can feel overwhelmed at times. There are ways, however, we can overcome current challenges or at least find strength and purpose in the face of them. They all require action on our part.

The first is finding solidarity with our fellow educators. Many of your colleagues are likely dealing with the same issues and feeling the same stress. Reach out to them whenever you get the chance. Ask them how they and their families are doing. Be an ear for someone who needs to vent. If there are new educators who are struggling to adjust, guide them if you can (also share FEA's New Educator Onboarding Guides).

Another way to face these challenges is by being an active member. While being an FEA member is itself an act of solidarity, the Association needs members to be engaged for it to be a strong one. This means running for a position in your school, such as FRS or HCRC, or for a role higher up in the union such as Local President. If you don't want to serve in a specific role, you could be engaged by helping plan union events at your school.

You could also sign up for upcoming Technical Evaluation Boards/Teams/Workgroups, which allow educators a voice on DoDEA's next student textbooks and course curriculum. There will also be standing educator committees for bargaining, curriculum, and other topics. These are important for educator voice. Sign up forms for the latter will be sent out next winter or spring.

We can find purpose amid these times by preparing the next generation for the challenges they will face. Our students are likely feeling the same stress as we are, perhaps even more so. They need our guidance. As educators, we can inspire our students to tackle the climate crisis, to see history honestly and fight injustice, to express themselves through music, writing and art, and to treat everyone with dignity.

Lastly, we can practice gratitude. Focusing on the good in our lives can make the difficult more bearable. There's plenty we can be grateful for: our friends and family; the chance to serve military communities; the moment you notice your students learning and growing. Personally, I'm grateful I've been able to live in and explore wonderful countries such as Japan and Germany, and to have met so many amazing DoDEA educators and FEA members.

We are living in challenging times, but we can meet the moment.

Show your interest in serving on Technical Evaluation Boards/Teams/Workgroups at <https://forms.office.com/r/SVQ7WE510i>



# Association Business

Richard Tarr  
FEA Executive Director

## Lifting Up Our ESP And HCR Members

Our Education Support Professional (ESP) members and Human and Civil Rights Coordinators (HCRs) occupy vital roles in our schools and association.

The former keep our schools open and students learning in so many ways, while the latter encourage diversity and acceptance among the staff and student body.

Not all FEA members are fully aware of the important work done by our ESP members and HCR Coordinators.

FEA is working to improve that situation.

I'd first like to highlight some of the great work our ESP and HCR leaders are doing.

In the Stateside Region, where ESPs have a distinct bargaining unit and Master Labor Agreement, five ESP leaders attended NEA training sessions on how to create ESP peer mentoring programs in their schools. Following the training, ESP leaders for Fort Campbell schools hosted the first ever ESP Learning Day in late 2022, followed by the second in summer 2023.

Additional trainings for ESP leaders and members continue to be developed by FEA ESP Coordinator Teresa Brown and the leaders of our ESP Local Associations (see story on page 1).

Meanwhile, FEA's Human and Civil Rights (HCR) Coordinator and Board Member Michael Johnson has created online professional development sessions for our HCRs, with a focus on best practices for members in the role.

Going forward, FEA will reinvigorate our resources to support our ESP and HCR leaders as they serve our membership.

The FEA HQ staff and FEA Board of Directors are identifying strategies and resources to make the ESP and HCR programs more impactful for our members.

Part of this work requires better understanding the needs of these members. This might mean, for example, understanding how ESPs' daily working conditions can be improved, whether through more breaks and resources, or better coordination with teachers. It could mean learning about what common issues

HCRs are facing, such as a lack of diverse backgrounds among educators or the possible banning of books in their schools.

There is something these members can do now. If you are an ESP member, consider serving in a ESP leadership role in your school or local association by running in next spring's election. Members, whether teachers or ESPs, should also consider running as Human and Civil Rights Coordinator for your school, Local, FEA division, or Area.

Your opinion matters. FEA members should ask themselves how they would like to see FEA supporting ESPs and HCRs, whether in your school or at higher levels of the Association.

If you have an idea, consider sharing it with your FRS, local President, or Area Director. You can also share your idea or ask questions about the roles of ESPs or HCRs, by emailing ESP Coordinator Teresa Brown ([feaspcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:feaspcoordinator@gmail.com)) or Michael Johnson ([Mjohnsonhcr@gmail.com](mailto:Mjohnsonhcr@gmail.com)).

**Get all the latest news on issues affecting FEA members by regularly visiting FEA's Web site at [feaonline.org](http://feaonline.org)**

**You can also follow us on Facebook or Twitter [@FedEdAssoc](https://www.facebook.com/FedEdAssoc)**

## Stateside Members Create First Governance Bylaws

Earlier this year, FEA's Stateside Area Council adopted and the members ratified their first ever bylaws.

As FEA-Stateside Region has grown over the years and taken on various challenges, leadership determined that established policies would help the union decide what actions to take in certain situations.

In 2020, Stateside leaders began the process of creating bylaws that govern the area and provide a framework for local associations. Several members of the Area Council volunteered to be on the newly formed bylaws committee.

Creating the bylaws took multiple stages. The FEA-SR committee first reviewed the FEA and NEA constitutions, NEA's standard operating procedures and bylaws, and governance documents from other unions. The drafted bylaws were then presented to the Area Council for review and discussion. All necessary changes were made to the bylaws based on those discussions and those with FEA counsel. The Stateside Area Council then approved the bylaws, followed by the FEA Board, and finally by Stateside members through a membership vote.

The bylaws will assist Stateside members in a variety of complicated situations.

Thank you to all Stateside members who served on the bylaws committee to assist with this important project.

FEA-SR members should familiarize themselves with both Stateside's and their local's bylaws.

## UniServ Attorneys: Protecting Your Rights

Contract negotiations may be the most well-known of the ways FEA's legal team works to support educators but members can be certain FEA General Counsels/UniServs fight for DoDEA educators in many ways, day in and day out.

***Who are FEA's General Counsels/UniServs, and what do they do?***

Also known as UniServs, these individuals make up a part of the FEA legal team. There are seven UniServs supporting Stateside, Europe, and the Pacific.

UniServs work to dispute and correct pay difficulties, litigate to protect and enforce DoDEA educators' rights as federal workers, stand beside employees in the face of unfair action by management, and more. To do this, they regularly:

- Elevate pay issues and other issues to the appropriate DoDEA managers;
- Represent employees by responding to proposed disciplinary actions;
- Fight for reinstatement and back pay for employees who have been wrongfully terminated or disciplined;
- File grievances to enforce negotiated agreements;
- Provide training to Association leaders and members on contracts and representational rights, and much more.

Europe Area General Counsel/UniServ Jan Freeman explained her typical workload:

"I often help educators navigate their way through difficult situations, such as pre-action investigations, disciplinary matters, leave issues, reasonable accommodations, dangerous students, disability retirement, extra duty assignment (EDA) issues, certification/recertification, pay problems, performance

issues, and trial periods. I also assist governance with unfair labor practices and negotiations over changes in working conditions.

"The comment I hear most often is how much it means to have a supportive, knowledgeable lawyer to speak with when they are going through something very traumatic."

As they do every year, FEA UniServs worked hard for educators in 2023. In September, Stateside UniServs won a case that upheld the rights of several educators whose wages were garnished and ordered DoDEA to refund the educators. The arbitrator in that case also called on DoDEA to implement a more transparent Leave and Earnings Statement (read more on page 6). Meanwhile, in Europe a UniServ recently defended a union Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS) who was unjustly targeted for reminding an educator of their rights (read more on page 5). The last case is just one example of how FEA regularly protects educators from unjust targeting.

### ***FEA Members Make UniServs' Work Possible***

The work of UniServs is only possible because of FEA members. Through member solidarity, FEA is able to employ UniServs to be a resource for educators, who otherwise would have to hire lawyers directly and pay the legal bills that would result.

Just as DoDEA educators are dedicated to giving their students a great education, FEA and its legal team are dedicated to defending educator rights.

### ***What To Do If You Have an Issue with DoDEA Management***

Remember, your school FRS is your first point of contact for Association assistance with an issue. If necessary, your FRS will assist you in getting your issue elevated up the FEA chain for further assistance.

## FEA Defends FRS Targeted for Supporting Educator

*After a principal targeted a union rep for reminding an educator of their rights, FEA stepped in.*

When a school Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS), who we'll call Mary, was called in to the principal's office to purportedly discuss school issues, she prepared herself for a tense discussion. The principal had come in the school year prior and had an adversarial approach to many educators, frequently changing school policies without educator input. Their relationship was tense at best. What she didn't expect was to be given an official letter of caution (LoC), one placed in her personnel file, especially one for fulfilling her duties as a union representative.

There are several ways FEA's Faculty Representative Spokespersons (FRSs) support educators. One is to fulfill employees' Weingarten rights, which allow "union-represented employees, upon request, to have their representative present during an interview that the employee reasonably believes could lead to discipline."

A few months earlier, an educator in the school was told they needed to be in the principal's office within the hour to answer questions for an official investigation. The educator invoked their Weingarten rights to have the school FRS, Mary, be present. Since the educator had no time to speak with an FEA counsel/UniServ beforehand, Mary reminded the educator during the meeting that they could invoke their right to answer questions until after they had spoken to counsel. The educator invoked this right.

Fast forward a few months and the principal gives Mary the letter of caution, not for anything related to her performance as an educator, but for how she had supported her colleague during the investigatory interview. Mary recalled getting the letter:

"The letter basically said I, the union representative, was rude, distracting, and told the member not to answer questions, which was false. The principal stated the letter

would stay in my school personnel file for a year, but also copied DoDEA Labor Management and Employee Relations (LMER) and official DoDEA files. It was obvious this was retaliation for me informing a member of their rights. Since I had recently pushed back against the principal unilaterally changing the duty day, I suspected this was retaliation for that as well. I had never had a punitive action against me as an DoDEA employee before. There was no way I could let it slide being reported for fulfilling my duties as a union rep. I immediately contacted our UniServ and Area Director for assistance."

The FEA UniServ listened to Mary explain the situation and took swift action. He first wrote to the principal, informing them their actions in writing Mary up for her duties as a union rep was an unfair labor practice and they needed to rescind the letter from any locations it was sent. After a few days of no response, the UniServ contacted LMER for a resolution. Eventually the Community Superintendent personally came to the school to give the FRS a memo stating the LOC would be removed immediately from all locations. He also went on to apologize for the situation and the time it took to rescind the letter, stating District and Area management knew nothing of this situation until FEA made it known. LMER said it took a while for the situation to be resolved because the principal was off for a month.

Mary reflected on how the experience makes her feel supported by FEA in the face of the difficult working conditions:

"To date the principal has not apologized for the LOC and I won't hold my breath. As long as the principal remains here, there will probably be many issues; they haven't seemed willing to be honest, treat people with respect, or work with the union representation thus far. That said, if anyone doubts the effectiveness of the union all they have to do is look at all that has been accomplished in a few short weeks. My advice for educators with problems: reach out to FEA if you need assistance."

## FEA Files Grievance on Overseas Lunch and Prep Time

FEA recently filed Association Grievance 23-09 alleging some Overseas educators are not being provided at least 30 minutes of duty-free lunch and the minimum prep time as agreed upon in the new Overseas contract.

There are two parts to this grievance. Firstly, the Association is alleging management is not providing all Overseas bargaining unit educators with at least a 30-minute duty-free lunch. Some educators are losing a large part of their 30 minutes of duty free lunch because they have to walk students back and forth from the cafeteria during that time, which means that time is not duty-free. There are also some locations that previously had more than 30 minutes for lunch and management is now trimming their time down to 30 minutes.

The second part of the grievance is about preparation time. Based on negotiated agreements, secondary schools educators should receive 2 periods per 7 period day to prep for classes, while elementary educators get 225 minutes per week. However, a significant number of Overseas educators have informed us that management has been encroaching on that time by assigning other duties, preventing them from using that time to plan.

This is the first grievance FEA has filed related to the new Overseas contract and is one that is a high priority case given its importance to FEA members.

Educators need time to effectively prepare for classes and deserve a sufficient break to have their lunch. FEA will fight to ensure they get them.

Overseas members can view the sections on lunch and prep time in Article 41 of the contract here: [www.feaonline.org/fea-dodds-contract/](http://www.feaonline.org/fea-dodds-contract/)

## Win In Stateside Debt Collection Case Bolsters Call for Smart LES

*An arbitrator ruling upholding the rights of several members in FEA's Stateside Region whose wages were garnished also calls for implementing something similar to the "Smart LES" FEA has long championed to help employees better understand their pay and alleged debts*

In a big win, an arbitrator ruled that several DoDEA employees in the Stateside Region were denied their due process rights when pay was garnished due to previous errors by the pay servicer. As part of an interim award, the arbitrator ordered the affected employees to be refunded with interest and for DoDEA to implement a more transparent paycheck.

In the past, pay problems were comparatively rare for DoDEA's Stateside employees. It was usually Overseas employees, who receive travel allowances to and from post, who bore the brunt of DoDEA's pay slip ups and shenanigans. Payroll errors in DoDEA Americas were

typically caught by employees who audited the paychecks before they went out. However, starting in 2019, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), DoDEA's pay servicer, switched to an automated system that regularly made errors to employees' bi-weekly rates when those rates moved along the pay scale.

Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, eight educators in DoDEA Americas had money garnished from their paychecks to collect on alleged overpayments due to DFAS errors. Critically, the pay was garnished without the educators being allowed to exercise their due process rights under the Debt Collection Act (DCA) prior to involuntary collection. As the arbitrator decision explains, employees are entitled to:

*"notice of their rights and of the nature of the debt, an opportunity to inspect and copy records, and an opportunity for a hearing held by an impartial hearing officer not under the supervision or control of the head of the Agency."*

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, arbitrator Barbara Deinhardt found that DoD violated the employees' statutory right to due process before the collection and ordered that any money collected be returned with interest. Additionally, DoDEA must pause current collections and withdraw derogatory credit reports for these employees, as well as modify their systems so all employees are given a "clear, fully understandable explanation of what is included in each check".

One requirement of this new Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) is that when the paid rate is different from the contractual rate or any deduction is taken, it must be explained on the LES so any reasonable person can understand. While FEA will be working to ensure DODEA implements this new LES as soon as possible, in the meantime DFAS and CHRA could have a dedicated team to audit paychecks on the front end, rather than solely relying on an automated system that creates errors.

Thank you for the hard work of Ben Hunter, the FEA UniServ who filed the case on behalf of the eight educators. As stated by Ben in the case filing, the most basic administrative function of any organization is paying its employees correctly. FEA will continue to fight to ensure all employees are paid accurately, their rights are respected, and DoDEA is an agency worthy of the hard work that our educators do to educate military-connected children. Crucially, we will keep pushing for a transparent LES to be implemented for all DoDEA employees, as multiple arbitrators have now ordered.

If you are a DoDEA employee Stateside or Overseas who is not being paid accurately or was denied your due process rights regarding your pay, please reach out to your school Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS) or building rep so they can elevate your issue up the FEA chain.

### FEA Continues To Drive Effort Toward A Smart LES

**Alongside the push for a Smart LES for Stateside, FEA continues to pressure DoDEA to implement a Smart LES for Overseas employees.**

**In 2022, DoDEA Director Brady was required to sign a notice, posted in Overseas schools, indicating that the Agency will comply with an arbitrator's decision requiring them to include clearer pay information within the LES. The notice was required by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) after DoDEA ignored an FLRA order to obey the 2015 arbitrator's ruling.**

**Since then, FEA attorney Bill Freeman has been monitoring DoDEA's implementation efforts and urging improvements through the FLRA. So far, the agency has been slow to move, making minor improvements to the MyPay and DoDEA CONNECTS systems, but not the LES itself.**

**Read more on the 2022 notice posted in schools:**

[feaonline.org/dodea-signals-intent-to-comply-with-smart-les-ruling/](https://feaonline.org/dodea-signals-intent-to-comply-with-smart-les-ruling/)

# Zama Band Director Chosen To March In Macy's Parade

Like many FEA members, Brad Harzman traveled to a get-together this past Thanksgiving – but Harzman's gathering included Snoopy and SpongeBob and was watched by a few million people around the world.

Harzman, a band teacher at Camp Zama Middle/High School in Japan, was among over 400 band directors selected to march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York. He participated through the Saluting America's Band Directors project, which recognizes people in that role for their accomplishments and assembles groups to march in parades and other events. Over 900 band directors applied to march in the parade.

"The event was amazing," Harzman says, "in the top five of my lifetime of experiences."

"I loved being a part of a band of intelligent, motivated, educated and skilled musicians. Our rehearsals were well planned and everyone was focused on making the whole group better."

The performance by Harzman and his fellow educator bandmates had two parts: marching down Central Park West and Sixth Avenue to play for the crowd lining the street to watch the parade, and playing for the TV cameras in front of Macy's flagship store at Herald Square.

The unique nature of the parade was one of the reasons Harzman applied to march in it.

"Many of us, including me, had grown up watching it on television and it's part of our identity as Americans," he says.

Harzman, who plays multiple instruments, marched with a mellophone – a type of French horn that resembles an oversized trumpet. The band played two melodies at the parade: a trio of marches and a "Big Apple Trio" of show tunes. A few days prior to the parade, Harzman and the band gave a special performance at the 9/11 memorial, where they played the Star Spangled Banner, Taps, and Amazing Grace as part of a small ceremony.

"It was somber, touching and beautiful," he says of the experience.

This year's parade in New York was the second major event Harzman participated in through the Saluting America's Band Directors project: he also joined 250 band directors in January 2022 to march in the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California. Compared to that event, Harzman says, the Macy's parade was relatively easy.

"The Pasadena parade was 5.5 miles long and the New York parade was 2.5 miles, so the length of the Rose Parade was a challenge," Harzman recalls.

Although he's in his second year as a DoDEA employee, Harzman has been a band director for 39 years and he has a long history with the Department of Defense. He joined the 35th Infantry Division Band of the Kansas Army National Guard in 1986.

"I deployed to Afghanistan as the US Army Band Mentor to the Afghan National Army Band 2006-2007," Harzman says. "When I returned to Kansas I stayed on Active Duty orders at Ft. Riley as a member of Task Force Dependable, training soldiers to deploy overseas. After that active duty period, I transferred to the 312th Army Band, an Army Reserve band. I have a total of 37 years of Army service."

Continuing his music career as a band director in DoDEA was a natural progression, he says.

"Music has always been important to me. I had good opportunities to play in band and sing in choir in my small Kansas high school and I wanted to share that love and excitement with my students."

The 2023-24 school year is the first time Zama M/HS has had two music teachers since 2017, allowing the school to field a marching band for the first time in several years. Harzman says he uses experiences like his marching in the Macy's parade to motivate students. He also finds the experience to be personally rewarding.



**Zama Middle/High School band director Brad Harzman was among 400 directors selected to march in this November's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.**

"My positive experience helps my students understand the excitement and service to our ZM/HS community our marching band provides."

"Playing Amazing Grace, Taps and the National Anthem at the 9/11 Memorial will always stick with me," he says. "Seeing the hundreds of thousands of people cheering and shouting encouragement along the parade route will also be a lifetime memory. Having the opportunity to meet 400 new friends in our band directors' band will also be a treasured memory."

# FEA and NEA Annual Meetings Set for Philadelphia This July

Fans of cheesesteak and democracy should mark their calendars now – Philadelphia hosts the FEA and NEA annual meetings this summer.

The FEA Annual Membership Meeting takes place July 1 and 2, 2024, at the Element hotel in downtown Philadelphia. The meeting is open to all FEA members, Active or Retired, and gives members an opportunity to hear from and question FEA elected leaders and staff about issues affecting the Association and its membership.

Registration for the FEA Annual Meeting is not necessary but those planning to attend are asked to notify FEA via email ([fea@feaonline.org](mailto:fea@feaonline.org)) to help us with planning.

As always, FEA's meeting occurs immediately before the NEA Annual Meeting, which is highlighted by the NEA Representative Assembly taking place July 3-7, 2024, at the Philadelphia Convention Center. Delegates representing their fellow members at the NEA-RA are elected from each of FEA's three Areas.

Those FEA delegates join thousands of their fellow NEA members from around the country to discuss, debate and vote on motions and elect officers that will govern NEA. The NEA-RA is the world's largest democratic deliberative assembly.

Learn more about the NEA-RA and its workings at [ra.nea.org](http://ra.nea.org).



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

Got Your Reading  
Event Planned Yet?

*NEA's Read Across  
America celebration takes  
place in early March!*

*"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](http://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](mailto:fea@feaonline.org)

# ***MEMBERSHIP IN ACTION***



Above and right: The Kaiserslautern Area Education Association in Germany combined their Fall Membership Event with a night out in celebration of World Pasta Day this October. Molto bene!



Above and left: Members at Fort Moore, Georgia, celebrated American Education Week in November by wearing t-shirts emblazoned with the words "Proud Fort Moore Educator." The shirts were provided by the Fort Moore Education Association.

***GOT SOME PICTURES OR A GREAT STORY INVOLVING  
MEMBERS AT YOUR SCHOOL? SEND THEM TO US AT  
FEA@FEAONLINE.ORG***

FEA Retired News

## NEA GRANT ALLOWS FEA-RETIRED TO REACH OUT TO OUR ESP MEMBERS

By Michael Priser, NEA Board Director—Retired Representative

Last year, NEA offered a series of grants to build membership through our local State Affiliates. This new program, CORAL, stood for the “Coalition of Retired and Active Leaders” working together to create a more cohesive and unified membership. The Federal Education Association—Retired saw an opportunity to reach out to our Educational Support Professionals. Last year FEA-R had no ESP Retired or Pre-Retired members. Through this grant, FEA-R was able to reach out to two of our classified local bargaining units, Camp Lejeune (NC) and Fort Stewart (GA).

Through informational meetings with our ESP members in a variety of forums, FEA-R was able to show how being a part of our Association in retirement benefits education, active employees and our retirees. We now have a handful of “Pre-Retired” ESP members, and requests have been made to expand our outreach.

One of the first ESP members to join FEA-R as a Pre-Retired member was Wendy Russell at Camp Lejeune. Wendy has worked for DoDEA for over 35 years as an office clerk and later as an educational aide. Wendy was there from the very beginning, organizing the classified employees in the early 90’s. “It was the first time, I believe that we realized that our voice had a right to be recognized and heard. We had a place at the table.”

After hearing about FEA-Retired’s commitment to all employees, Wendy pointed out that after retiring it is not only necessary

but an obligation to insure the life and the longevity of FEA. “We cannot rest on our laurels, especially in the current times in which we live,” noted Wendy.

FEA-R will continue to reach out to all of our members and encourage them to consider joining FEA-R now as a Pre-Retired member. As a Pre-Retired member, one pays the current lifetime (one-time) dues and then becomes a Retired member upon retirement without paying any additional money. FEA-R advocates for our Federal employees in retirement to repeal unfair laws and to safeguard our entitlements.

### 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.

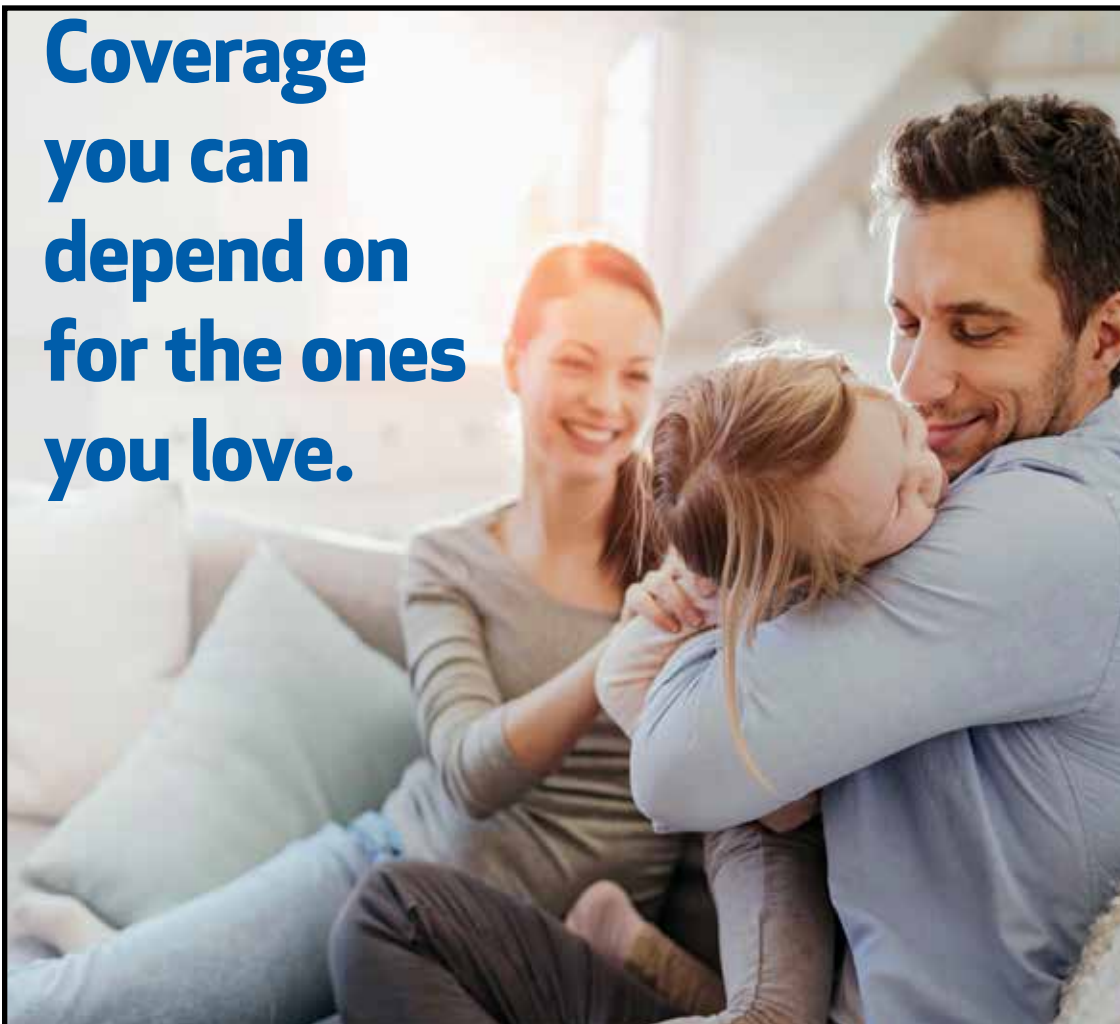
As an FEA/NEA Retired member, you will be able to retain access in your retirement to the many Member Benefits programs for retired members, including various financial, insurance and investment programs. You will also continue to receive FEA and NEA publications. And, if you decide to substitute teach 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/](http://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](mailto: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](http://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**

**nea** *Members*  
Insurance Trust

\*Visit us online or call for eligibility requirements.  
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Visit [neamb.com/protect](http://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**

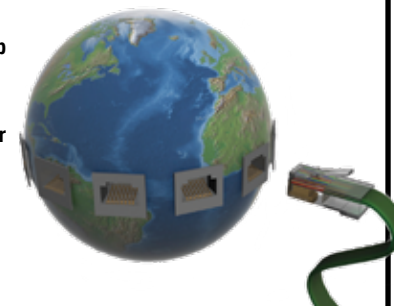
**00539-111**

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](http://www.neamb.com)



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## Calendar of Events

### JANUARY

15

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

26-28

NEA Women's/Minority  
Leadership Training – East  
Baltimore, MD

### MARCH

week of March 4

NEA's Read Across America

3-5

NEA Retired Conference  
Chicago

22-24

NEA Education Support  
Professional Conference  
Las Vegas

## FIND YOUR EDCOMMUNITIES GROUP

Where can you share, collaborate and network with educators from across FEA and across the country?  
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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](http://MyNEA360.org)

