



Europe Newsletter

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NEA Representative Assembly Election Information

Nominations are open for FEA-Europe delegates to the NEA RA in Denver, CO, this summer. If you are interested, please fill out [the nomination form](#). We have six positions and currently only two people running! The deadline is **February 1st, 2026** for nominations. Please see the article below from Jessica Yucel about her experiences attending the RA.

The first time I attended the NEA Representative Assembly, I had no idea what to expect. I was excited to have been elected to be a delegate, but I wasn't exactly sure what that meant. I set off for Philadelphia—to visit, work, and explore. As soon as I arrived, I quickly realized this was going to be an event like no other. Making my way to the hotel, I could see educators everywhere. We're easy to spot in education-themed T-shirts, lanyards worn like badges of honor, and that familiar blend of boundless enthusiasm and "I've seen some things." The vibe was upbeat and the air full of optimism. At the hotel, I quickly met up with other DoDEA educators, some were first time delegates, while others seasoned attendees, excited to welcome us newcomers into the fold and show us the ropes.

Initially, we spent our time together, at the FEA Annual Meeting, hearing all the things FEA has been involved in over the past year, and getting started on our work as delegates. The primary responsibility of the RA is to review and vote on proposed New Business Items that guide the work of the Association for the coming year. As an FEA delegation, much of our time was devoted to discussing these items and deciding how we would cast our individual votes. We were also visited by candidates running for different elected positions within NEA, current NEA leaders who delivered impassioned speeches of solidarity, and even AFSPA, the health insurance company, who put on a generous social for the delegates, any FEA members, and their families.

Then, it was time to register for the NEA Representative Assembly. We went to the convention center, which was abuzz with educators from all over the nation. After registering and receiving our materials, we explored the space—visiting vendor tables and caucus booths filled with conversation, colorful displays, fun freebies, and unique T-shirts. The excitement in the air was palpable, but it was nothing compared to what was still to come.

As I entered the floor of the RA, I felt the magnitude of the event. The RA consists of about 7,000 educator delegates representing all 50 state affiliates along with the District of Columbia and FEA, including retired members, and other education professionals. It is the largest democratic deliberative assembly in the U.S. The time I spent in that room was unlike anything I had ever experienced. Listening to debate, engaging in discussion, and voting on critical issues alongside thousands of fellow educators was exhilarating. I met people not only from FEA but from delegations across the nation. Everyone was welcoming, passionate, and genuinely excited. I felt an immense sense of pride—proud to be part of such a powerful process, and especially proud to represent the interests of FEA members. While the RA was the central focus, the experience extended beyond the convention center. Evenings were filled with optional events, informal gatherings, and opportunities to explore the city. Between sessions, delegates bonded over meals, sightseeing, and shared stories. Many of us stayed in touch after returning home, already hoping to reunite at future RAs.

Serving as a delegate is truly a unique opportunity—one I hope more members will consider. While delegates are responsible for getting themselves to the host city, accommodations are covered and a stipend provided. It's a meaningful experience that offers an incredible return in connection, professional growth, and democratic engagement. If you'd like more information, please reach out to me at fea.europe.west@gmail.com. I would love to share more and hopefully encourage you to experience the NEA RA for yourself. (See photos on page 4.)

NEA Excellence in Education Award

The NEA Foundation is the proud founder and host of the annual Salute to Excellence in Education. Often referred to as the “Academy Awards of Education,” this event honors outstanding educators and champions of public education from across the country.

They recognize how vital educators are for the future of our nation’s youth, the advancement of equity, the connections within our communities, and the health of our democracy. That’s why The NEA Foundation honors educators, individuals, and organizations shaping the present and future of public education.

This year, FEA-Europe is proud to have nominated FEA’s award winner, **William Dawson**, History and Government teacher at Lakenheath High School and long-term Faculty Representative Spokesperson. William will receive his award in mid-February at a gala reception in Washington, DC along with 47 of his peers from other state affiliates. Congratulations William for his outstanding work with DoDEA students and his continuous advocacy for members and the Association.

If you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else for the 2027 awards, Sharon Manuel, FEA President, provided this information in her Friday update.

2027 NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence

- The NEA Foundation is now accepting nominations for the 2027 Awards for Teaching Excellence.
- These awards recognize educators who demonstrate excellence in teaching, strong advocacy, and a commitment to equity, inclusion, and community engagement.
- Awards will be presented in February 2027 in Washington, DC.

Eligibility:

- All current members of an NEA local affiliate or bargaining unit are eligible, including teachers, ESPs, and higher education faculty and staff
- FEA may submit one nominee to NEA, but all Active FEA members are encouraged to apply for internal review

Awards:

- Expenses-paid travel to Washington, DC
- Five Horace Mann Award recipients receive \$10,000
- One recipient also receives the NEA Member Benefits Award, including \$25,000

FEA submission deadline: **Monday, February 23, 2026**

Nomination materials and the full packet are available [here](#). (You will need to login to the FEA website for access. Completed packets should be submitted via email to FEAdmin@nea.org and bchance@nea.org.)

Membership Concerns

With the implementation of AutoPay, along with a fabulous new team in the FEA Washington office, not to mention a government shutdown, there have been several snags concerning dues payments.

Hellem Hernandez is our new membership coordinator and she is doing a stellar job trying to keep all those plates in the air. FEA cannot see any banking or credit card information. If numbers are entered incorrectly, when payments are due, and cannot be accessed, a notice of non-payment is generated. If you receive one, PLEASE reach out to Hellem at FEAMembership@nea.org and copy FEA.Europe.AD@gmail.com so we can update our records.

If you have moved schools, please let us know and we will send you a form to fill out to update your record. FEA will not make any changes to your records without your request. If there are newbies at your school, please ASK them to join. The #1 reason people don’t join is that no one asks them!

Finally, FEA incurs about \$30 per credit card payment annually. If all members paid by credit card, FEA-Europe would spend over \$36000 in fees, money that could go to supporting programs and schools. Please consider, for future years, updating your details to EFT from a bank account so we can put our money where it can do the best for members.

Update on Pay Issues Related to the Shutdown

FEA-Europe's pay gurus Bill and Will Freeman have finished their analysis of a sample of Furlough Pay Issues. This is their report.

It is quite a puzzle. Here is the bottom line: DoDEA got the PPE 10/4/25 payment wrong for the 7 days of Regular Pay and no pay for LQA or Post Allowance. But as far as they can tell, without seeing "Full Audit" records, It looks like there is a very good chance they have corrected everything. They just did an extremely poor job explaining it all. DoDEA apparently did not violate the Debt Collection Act because they "corrected" alleged debts within 4 Pay Periods in accordance with the Fair Debt Collection Act of 1996.

Here is what they are seeing:

- PPE 10/4/25: Paid only for 7 days of Regular Pay, with no LQA or Post Allowance, and with diminished deductions for Medicare, Tax Withholding, OASDI, Retirement, and TSP. (Therefore, 3 days short for Regular Pay and 14 days short for LQA and Post Allowance). Apparently, there was a "Coding Issue" resulting in less Regular Pay than should have been received for the 7 days.
- PPE 10/18/25: No Pay and No Deductions. (10 days short for Regular Pay and 14 days short for LQA and Post Allowance) (now cumulative total is 13 days short for Regular Pay and 28 days short for LQA and Post Allowance).
- 10/29/15: Large amount of Special Pay but no LES or explanation. And the "Coding Issue" was apparently corrected.
- PPE 11/1/25: Minus figure for Current Regular Pay offset by 10 days of LQA and Post Allowance Retroactive Earnings. (Resulting in no Net Pay and 4 days short of LQA and Post Allowance) (Now the cumulative total is 23 days short for Regular Pay and 32 days of LQA and Post Allowance). And there is a small Special Pay deduction and several negative deductions, which are actually positive refunds of earlier deductions.
- PPE 11/15/25: Current Pay is correct. There is a very large Retroactive Payment for 23 days of Regular Pay, and 32 days of LQA and Post Allowance. (Correcting all of the days short, above). The very large Special Pay is deducted from this amount. And the earlier non-deductions were made up.

This is by necessity a "ballpark calculation" from them. It is the best they could do with the limited documents available. As you can imagine, this would be much clearer if DoDEA had implemented a truly SMART LES or provided a "Full Audit."

There is a way for YOU to calculate this "ballpark figure" yourself. Bill and Will did it as a double check. Look at your LES's before shutdown. Take average figures for each type of pay and deduction. Then compare these numbers to the LES's and special payments reflected in LES's from PPE 10/4/25 through 11/15/25. The special payments are reflected in the "deductions" section on PPE 11/1/25 and 11/15/25.

There is a way you can be even more confident this issue has been corrected. You can wait until the School Pay Year is over on July 31. Fill out the [FEA Pay Organizer](#) (to get a picture of everything.) Then, compare those figures to your new salary scale that comes out in the Spring Retro. That will give you a very good indication regarding Regular Pay. LQA, Post Allowance, and deductions are always going to be a bit of a mystery. Any incorrect tax withholdings are a red herring. When you file taxes for 2025, it really makes no difference how much they withheld. You simply pay more tax owed or get a refund if too much was withheld.

Another Great Opportunity

The NEA Foundation supports a program called the [Global Learning Fellowship](#). For SY2026, SHAPE High School's Natalie Johnson will be representing FEA-Europe in this amazing program. Natalie shared her insight as she embarks on her journey. This fellowship includes a 10-day, all expense paid international field study to examine the education system, culture, and historical context of South Africa. Previous studies have been to Peru, China, Brazil, and Costa Rica. The 2027 destination will be announced in March. Applications are open now and close 2 April 2026.

I Am An Impostor by Natalie Sparks Johnson

I will never be one of those teachers who get that sort of recognition. Those opportunities are for educators who stand out and do amazing things inside and outside the classroom. At least, that's what I told myself for years.

The first time I ever applied for a fellowship was in 2021, during COVID, when I applied for the Utah Teacher Fellows program. My school had gone fully online, and the state of Utah was offering virtual professional learning. In one of my classes, a professor encouraged us to apply for various initiatives and fellowships. I remember thinking, "Why not apply? What can it hurt?" So I did, and promptly forgot all about it.

Months later, I was invited to interview. Then came the acceptance letter.

That fellowship changed me. It pushed me beyond the walls of my classroom and into conversations with other educators, policymakers, and community leaders. I learned about initiatives far bigger than my own daily practice and, more importantly, I began to realize that what I do does matter. That my voice, informed by everyday classroom experiences and my students' lives, has real value.

That confidence sparked something new inside me. I began sharing my classroom practices, including project-based learning activities, community-centered projects, and global connections, with other educators at state, national, and international conferences. And although I still feel like an impostor at times, I found the courage to keep saying yes to growth and to apply for other fellowships.

Most recently, I was accepted into the NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship. I still have moments of doubt. But I've learned this: Impostor syndrome doesn't mean you do not belong; it often means you're growing.

If you're reading this and thinking, "That's not me. I'm not that kind of teacher," I invite you to reconsider. Apply anyway. Your story, your classroom, and your students matter more than you realize. Sometimes the most powerful step forward begins with a quiet, uncertainty "why not apply?"

Graphics of the Week- The NEA RA

