



Europe Newsletter

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It's Nearly Summer!

As we prepare for summer recess, check all your important documents for expiration dates. Check your stateside drivers' licenses, tourist passports, visa (if you're in the UK), and ID cards.

As we enter into a time to recharge, one that may be more necessary than ever before, put yourself first. Put an out-of-office message on Outlook and DO NOT check it if you are not in duty status. For those working summer school, if issues arise, reach out to FEA.Europe.AD@gmail.com. It will be monitored with less frequency but monitored.

With the changes in leadership at HQ, the future remains uncertain. FEA President Sharon Manuel met with Mr. Craft, Chief Dependent Education Officer, in April. He has been invited to join the FEA Annual Meeting in Denver in July. To date, we have not had confirmation of his attendance. His visits throughout Europe have highlighted his education background and, as we all may remember, working for the federal government is a unique experience and it is not easy to change direction just because you want to.

Ms. Hoben, Senior Advisor for Academic Integrity and Compliance, has not been visible to educators. A video on DoDEA Connects and YouTube, of an All-Hands' Meeting at HQ makes for interesting viewing, especially the potential changes to the Blueprint. The video can be found [here](#). (Speech is still intelligible at 1.5x speed.)

FEA-Europe has heard your successes and concerns throughout the year. We know there is much still to do, and we will be BACK!

Thank You Retirees!

FEA-Europe wants to take a moment to thank retirees who have worked diligently to create the outstanding school system our military families deserve. Your work has not gone unnoticed. You are appreciated!

Please continue to engage to support our schools, staff, and students. There are many ways to do that and joining FEA-Retired will provide you with options that don't take much time, but could potentially reap great benefits. See the [FEA Website](#) for more information.

If you are interested in receiving an FEA-Europe retirement certificate mailed to you, please fill out [this form](#). Certificates will be sent after school dismisses for the summer.

For those leaving the Agency for whatever reason, thank you for your service to your school and our military-connected families. Please see the Goodbye Grievance information below.

For those moving from overseas, including Cuba, to DoDEA-America schools, Guam, Puerto Rico and Europe South, please continue reading about the Goodbye Grievance.

From FEA Washington's weekly update, make sure you file your **Goodbye Grievance**.

A goodbye grievance is essential for departing Overseas educators in Europe and the Pacific. It is the only way FEA can continue supporting members in retirement, especially if issues like debt letters arise. Without one on file, FEA's ability to assist after separation is very limited.

For members preparing to retire or leave, filing a goodbye grievance ensures continued union support during a time that can bring unexpected challenges. Membership is required to file and access this protection.

If you or a colleague are planning to retire, now is the time to act. Filing a goodbye grievance is a simple step that can make a lasting difference. Please reach out if you have any questions or need assistance.

Area Level Consultations

On May 1st, International Labor Day, FEA-Europe District Representatives and Area Director engaged in a different style of consultations similar to that of Europe-South. The four Association representatives listed above met with Dr. Brahaney and all three District Superintendents in one meeting to address overarching issues throughout Europe. The minutes have been sent to Management for additional information. It is expected that these minutes will be in your hands before 1 June 2026 with our without responses from Management.

During the meeting, Superintendents continued to ask for specifics relevant to their district and the District Representatives will follow up, as necessary, with these details and proposed solutions for resolution.

Topics included:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Special Education concerns
- Safety (focused on dysregulated students)
- Student Discipline
- Secondary School Official Time
- High School ELA offerings
- Upcoming Cell Phone Policy
- RTI/WIN time uses
- Changes to Elementary Scheduling
- Presidential Fitness Testing
- Unique needs of large elementary schools
- BOY school schedules
- Collaboration between FRS and Admin
- Administration Surveys

While not all topics were addressed to completion, the Association asked for data the Management is using to make decisions and we will continue to advocate for the protections of our educators, leaders, and students!

This format is used in Europe South with OFT. This new format of meeting will take some tweaking. It is a great opportunity for all to have input and responses but with three districts, compared to OFT's one, discussions take longer.

K-5 Standards-Based Report Cards

As Area Director, I attended Quarters 3 and 4 CCRS days at Alconbury Elementary school to participate in training about standards-based report cards. I am a secondary teacher and do my best to learn how elementary schools work and how elementary educators think.

I appreciate all those that shared insights with me during these sessions. I took copious notes, downloaded many of the materials, and asked questions of the ISSs when I didn't understand.

I would like to be proactive with Management to highlight potential issues BEFORE this is implemented. As a result, I have created a [Google Document](#), open through June, for members to share concerns. The form is locked. Please ask for permission and then your membership will be checked and your permission granted. Membership has privileges.

If you would like to have the opportunity to edit the document before it is sent to Management, please identify that in an "issue" and then put your name in the last column.

Graphic of the Summer!



Local Funding

FEA-Europe allocates \$22 per member to the local for a full time member and \$10 for part time members. This practice has been going on for years. The Europe Area Council (EAC) encourages locals to create events that attract members in a variety of ways with the goal of building community and professionalism. Some options are, but are not limited to: FEA Spirit Wear, Guest Speakers, Book Groups, Dinners/General Meetings, and social events. If you have an idea for something that would interest you, contact your local President or District Representative with details. Remember, these things don't just magically happen; they take human resources to make possible so volunteer today to set something up.

As we have moved to AutoPay, Europe has approximately 1250 members in the three districts. Over 500 of these pay using recurring credit card payments. As a result of fees established by Bank of America, the EAC has chosen to share the cost with the locals this year. Each of the locals with a member paying by credit card will only receive \$12 per full time member. Next year, the local will be responsible for the full amount, nearly \$30 per member. Please consider changing from credit cards to electronic dues transfer so that we are not charged these exorbitant fees and we can continue to provide funds for locals to do the things they want. It is not an option to charge credit card paying members a surcharge for these fees.

If you wish to make this money saving change, please go to the [FEA Website](#). Using your membership number and zip code you can make changes to your preferred method of payment. If you need your membership number, reach out to FEA.Europe.AD@gmail.com. It is not urgent, but please make the change before 1 September.

Editorial from your A.D.

Over a million US citizens live in Europe. As federal employees, we are eligible to vote. It is our civic responsibility to voice our opinions about who runs our government up and down the ballot. The elected officials impact education across the US and for us, around the world. Local and state governments impact our friends and family and our futures when/if we choose to return to the US.

As a certified Federal Voter Assistance Officer, my team and I helped dozens of military members, spouses, and civilians sign up to receive their absentee ballots at the Mildenhall Spouses' Association bazaar. It was incredibly motivating to see the enthusiasm from some, and depressing to hear the excuses from others about why they were or weren't voting.

Do you believe:

- Election day should be a federal holiday?
- Early voting and absentee ballots allow more people access to the ballot box?
- Voting should be mandatory like it is in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Australia?
- Requirements for voter ID should not be more restrictive than they currently are?

You have an opportunity to make your voice heard. I have created a spreadsheet to assist anyone who would like support. Please fill in [the form](#) and I will be in touch, if requested. I will help eligible spouses, children, or friends too!

It's not just about the House and Senate. 33 states will elect governors along with three territories. 84% of state legislative seats are up for election. Half of the states elect judges, along with school board positions, and more.

In 1980, I voted in my first Presidential election. I remember the buzz. I haven't missed an election since! I do my homework and choose candidates whose values align with my own. I win some, I lose some, but **I KEEP VOTING!!**

Recognition

So many people deserve recognition for all they do to support your Association. It is important for members to understand that rarely do individuals come to Association leadership with GOOD news or gratitude. These leaders are sometimes, metaphorically, beat up by the amount of negativity that ends up on their plates with limited appreciation for the jobs they do. And, that does not include hostility from some principals.

To begin with, **elected school leaders, FRs, FRs, and FR-HCRs** play a crucial role. The Europe Area Council (EAC) depends on these amazing humans for our information because often, news arrives in the school BEFORE the Association is informed. I'm sure that shocks most of you! (Sarcasm intended.) There is no limit to the number of FRs and if you are working with a difficult administrative situation, the EAC recommends MANY FRs with regular communication, to remove the opportunity for admin to pit one group against another or report inaccurately about agreements.

Following along are **officers of the local Associations**. These people coordinate issues among the schools to be able to elevate commonalities to the District Representatives for attention. If something is happening in one local, then it is likely to be happening in others. These leaders also coordinate activities for building unity and comradery among educators. They determine how the funds designated to the locals are spent. A secondary teacher talking about issues with an elementary teacher and vice versa will create a greater understanding and appreciation of the jobs each do along with the issues each group faces.

The next group to recognize is your **Europe Area Council**. These people go above and beyond, often seven days a week, including many evenings, to meet, respond to emails/messages, provide input and support for a vast range of issues. There is continual communication among the five members to determine where issues lay and how to address it, and with whom. While we do not go looking for issues, the EAC certainly does not shy away from them when they arise.

FEA Washington has also been a steady support to FEA-Europe. There has been some growing pains with AutoPay but everyone has consistently been available to discuss and potentially elevate issues. A good deal of information is shared from Washington to the Areas for sharing, like participation in Textbook Evaluation Teams (TETs) or changes in Administrative Instructions or program guidance. Sharon Manuel has consistently asked for participants on TETs, for feedback concerning Administrative Instructions or program guidance and general. She is a strong advocate!!

Words do not exist to adequately describe the recognition for **our SPECTACULAR ATTORNEYS!** **Jan Freeman's** representation of Europe West, Wiesbaden, and some KMC elementary schools has been exceptional. Her knowledge of federal law and her steadfast devotion to our Association are second to none. **Alex Nguyen's** representation of Europe East, the remainder of Europe Central, and Cuba is dedicated and committed. His knowledge and clarity of writing has supported many educators resolute advocate for educators. The team of **Bill Freeman** and **Will Freeman** covering the plethora of pay related issues before, during, and after the government shutdown has been monumental. We are deeply indebted (pun intended) to them for their perseverance and attention to detail.

The final thanks goes to **YOU, the members**. Without you, none of this would be possible. Regardless of what the future holds, FEA-Europe will continue to be there to to advocate for educators' rights, for common sense approaches to education practice, and supportive administrators who see kindness and collaboration as tools for to successful schools.

Tone Policing in Schools: A Human & Civil Rights Concern

This school year, many educators have noticed a rise in tone policing; not toward students, but toward staff. Instead of focusing on instructional practice, some administrators are reprimanding teachers for not sounding “sweet enough,” even when the teacher’s tone is calm, firm, and appropriate for guiding student learning.

Picture a common classroom moment: a teacher encourages a student through productive struggle. The student is capable but frustrated, and the teacher, steady and insistent, tries to help them try a new strategy. No raised voice. No disrespect. Just teaching. An administrator overhears and later calls the teacher in to say, “Your tone wasn’t appropriate.”

This shifts the focus away from learning and onto a subjective expectation of “pleasantness.” There is no training that requires educators to speak in sugary tones at all times. Firmness is not unprofessional. Direct communication is not misconduct and not every educator communicates like Mary Poppins—and they shouldn’t have to.

What makes this more than a workplace annoyance is its civil rights impact. Tone policing is a well-documented silencing tactic used disproportionately against:

- Women
- Black educators and other educators of color
- LGBTQ+ staff
- People with disabilities
- Individuals engaged in protected activity (reporting concerns, requesting accommodations)

In civil rights investigations, tone-based reprimands often appear alongside other behaviors that contribute to retaliation or a hostile work environment; selective enforcement, heightened scrutiny, or attempts to undermine credibility. Tone policing rarely stands alone; it is usually part of a larger pattern.

A sweet tone does not make an action supportive, and a straightforward tone does not make it harmful. What matters is intent, context, and professionalism, not whether someone meets an administrator’s personal preference for emotional performance.

When tone policing is used to silence, intimidate, or control staff, it becomes a leadership problem and a civil rights issue. Educators deserve workplaces where communication differences are respected, where firmness is recognized as part of effective teaching, and where subjective judgments about tone are not used to diminish or discipline professionals.

Tone policing has no place in a healthy school climate. Our voices matter, and how we use them should never be weaponized against us.

For those wanting to understand this issue more deeply, Cara Hutto’s article, “What Is Tone Policing? The Problem with Gatekeeping Emotions,” offers an accessible and powerful explanation of how tone policing silences people and reinforces inequity. It’s a strong companion piece for educators reflecting on their own experiences. <https://www.inhersight.com/blog/people-belonging/tone-policing>