Welcome To SY 06-07!

In This Issue: The Complete Insider’s Guide to FEA
Notes from the President
Sheridan Pearce

- **WELCOME BACK** – I hope everyone had a safe and relaxing summer break and has returned to school refreshed and reinvigorated.

- **FEA TURNS 50** – It was 1956 when a group of educators in Germany, upset over a Pentagon plan to shut schools down early in order to save money, banded together to form the organization that would eventually grow into FEA. To be sure, all of our lives as DoDEA employees would be very different today if those individuals had not decided to work together in order to stand up for themselves and their students. Virtually every facet of our professional lives, from the salaries we receive to the benefits and legal protections we enjoy, has been improved significantly over the years thanks to our ability to act as a union.

- **NSPS** – The successes we achieved this summer in the fight against the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) are a perfect example of the benefits union membership offers. By being able to speak and act with one voice, and work along with similar employee unions representing hundreds of thousands of other DoD civilian employees, we have been able to virtually stop NSPS and the threats to employee rights and protections it sought to implement. FEA’s legal staff in Washington, Executive Director/General Counsel H.T. Nguyen and Staff Attorney Richard Tarr, have been prominent leaders in the labor coalition’s fight against NSPS and they deserve more than a little credit for the successful strategy that has been used to fight NSPS so far. See H.T.’s article on the next page for more on the NSPS fight.

- **SMS** – Despite NSPS and the upheaval caused by base realignments and closings, the single biggest headache for DoDEA employees last year was the Student Management Solution (SMS). At the time of this writing, FEA and DoDEA headquarters continue to work on a new SMS agreement for School Year 2006-2007. We’ve already been assured the grade book feature of SMS will not be required this year (although it will remain available for anyone who voluntarily chooses to use it). FEA will continue to monitor SMS very closely as we begin the new school year to identify further problems and work with headquarters to develop solutions. We will send out updates on SMS as needed throughout the year.

- **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION** – Just prior to press time for this issue of the Journal, FEA joined NEA, 31 NEA state affiliates, and other groups, in supporting two important affirmative action cases soon to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Amicus Curiae (Friend of the Court) briefs to be filed by NEA and the majority of its states affiliates, including FEA, support the contested affirmative action programs in Seattle, Washington, and Jefferson County, Kentucky, and stand up against attempts to water down the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision.

- **BACK TO SCHOOL PARTIES** – Many thanks to our local FEA leaders who already have or soon will host parties to welcome back current and prospective FEA members and to show the promotional DVD FEA created. We know the start of school is already a very busy time and we greatly appreciate all of your efforts to get this DVD seen. We hope the video on the DVD will be helpful to you in your membership promotion efforts. Please send any questions, comments or suggestions you have about the DVD to Gary Hritz, FEA’s Communications Coordinator, at ghritz@feaonline.org.

Again, welcome back, and have a great school year.
This summer was anything but quiet in our ongoing battle to protect our members against the Pentagon’s National Security Personnel System (NSPS) and its attempts to curtail our basic rights as civilian employees.

Our two-pronged attack on the NSPS proposal, utilizing both litigation and direct lobbying of Congress to stop the Pentagon’s harmful proposal for a new civilian personnel system, has resulted in a pair of important victories this summer that could force NSPS to be scrapped, or at least significantly redesigned.

On the legislative front, FEA and the other member unions in the United DoD Workers Coalition successfully lobbied the House of Representatives to cut off funding for portions of the NSPS proposal.

Those portions, dealing with collective bargaining and appeals rights for DoD civilian employees, were declared in February 2006 to be in violation of Congress’s directives for the creation of a new civilian personnel system at DoD. That decision was handed down by U.S. District Judge Emmet G. Sullivan in a ruling on a lawsuit filed by the Workers Coalition.

On June 20, the House voted to support an amendment to the 2007 Defense Appropriations Bill that would cut off funds for parts of NSPS Judge Sullivan found to be in violation of the law. The amendment, sponsored by Democrats Jay Inslee (WA) and Chris VanHollen (MD) and Republican Walter Jones (NC), passed without opposition on a voice vote.

The second front in the fight against NSPS, litigation (as represented by the Coalition lawsuit Judge Sullivan ruled in favor of, and a separate and still pending lawsuit filed by FEA to deal with issues specific to our members), also received a huge boost this summer.

That boost came when a three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld and expanded a lower court’s decision that a similar personnel system at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was also in violation of Congress’s directives.

The judges called the DHS personnel system “utterly unreasonable” and said it “makes no sense on its own terms.”

The decision against the DHS personnel system is good news in our fight against NSPS because the two personnel systems are very similar and both were authorized by Congress under very similar directives. If the DHS system is illegal, it is logical to expect DoD’s appeal of Judge Sullivan’s decision against NSPS to be no more successful.

If that logic holds, DoD may be forced to go back to the drawing board in its attempts to create a new civilian personnel system – or it may simply shelve the idea altogether.

To be certain, the fight against NSPS is not yet over. FEA and the DoD Workers Coalition are watching the Defense Appropriations Bill very closely as it moves through the Senate and Conference Committees to be sure funding for the illegal portions of NSPS is not reinstated. And, despite the apparent good news of the DHS appeal being denied, nothing is certain about the NSPS case until the court rules on that appeal. That may not happen until sometime in 2007.

Still, the summer of 2006 brought us some much-needed good news in the fight to protect our labor relations and appeals rights and we remain optimistic about our chances of permanently defeating NSPS. I hope our members will celebrate these important victories when you gather for your Back To School parties to watch FEA’s new promotional DVD. And I hope you have a great school year 2006-2007.
In 1857, Robert Campbell, an African-American teacher at the Philadelphia Institute of Youth was the founding member of the National Education Association (NEA). He helped to define NEA’s mission which is “To elevate the character and advance the interests of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of popular education in the United States.”

Almost 100 years later, in 1956, the Overseas Education Association was formed for Department of Defense Overseas schools. When the Stateside Department of Defense (DDESS) schools were added in 1994, it became the Federal Education Association.

During the 50 years of OEA/FEA there have been many different structures or organizations of officers and staff. Even today a position may have different titles in different areas but overall the FEA organization is consistent throughout and is aligned with the DoDEA, DoDDS and DDESS structures.

Through the use of the following diagrams and explanation boxes we will try to take the FEA Organization from titles to people and visually align it with their counterparts and responsibilities.

DoDEA follows a mostly manager-driven model, wherein directives, policies, etc., are set at the headquarters, Area Director or DSO level and flow toward the school.

In FEA, all decisions are member driven since all association officers are answerable to the members who elected them. This results in a more “school-based” philosophy.

DoDEA Structure

- Building Principal
- District Superintendents Office
- Area Directors for Europe, Pacific and Stateside
- DoDEA Headquarters in Arlington, VA

FEA Structure

- Individual FEA Members
- Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS) or other building-level Association representative elected by members in each building
- FEA Area Councils in Europe, the Pacific and Stateside
- FEA District Representative, Local President or Country President elected by FEA Members in the district or local
- Membership Processors and Area Staff

FEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Made up of the FEA President, four other At-Large Officers, and four Area Directors

FEA President
- Sheridan Pearce
  - elected by all Active FEA members

FEA At-Large Officers
- Ted Carlin - Vice President
- Linda Callender - Sec./Treasurer
- Trudy Pollard - NEA Director
- Wanda Beatty - HCR Coord.
  - elected by all Active FEA members

FEA Executive Director/General Counsel
- H.T. Nguyen
  - Reports to the FEA Board of Directors
  - Supervises FEA staff, advises on legal and other matters

FEA Area Directors
- Caroline Myers - Stateside
- Jan Amend - Pacific
- Roseann Drydale - Europe
- Chuck McCarter - Europe
  - elected by members from Area

FEA UniServ Attorneys
- Michael Baumernfeind - Pacific
- Dorothy Lee - Stateside
- Jan Freeman, Bill Freeman & Sequita Banks - Europe

FEA Washington Staff
- Connie Shanaghan - Dir. of Administration
- Barbara Wright - Finance/ULSP Coord.
- Alice Jefferson - Staff Attorney
- Patricia Weil - Executive Assistant
- Gary Hritz - Communications Coord.
- Richard Tarr - Staff Attorney

Information, requests for assistance, and questions/concerns from members flow from school level through FEA District, Area and Board/Washington levels, where they are handled by the appropriate FEA representative or staff member.
Protecting Your Rights

What is a Grievance?
Simply stated, a grievance is a complaint concerning any matter related to the employment of a DoDEA employee in FEA’s bargaining unit. A grievance may also deal with matters such as a violation of our collective bargaining agreement, or any other violation of regulations or laws governing employment conditions.

Who May File a Grievance?
Any individual in FEA’s bargaining unit (Overseas or Stateside) may file a grievance. Normally, individual bargaining unit members write and document their own grievances. You may also obtain advice and/or assistance from your Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS), who in turn can get help from FEA’s legal staff or leaders.

What’s a Group Grievance?
As its name implies, a group grievance is filed on behalf of multiple bargaining unit members who share a common complaint. The group can select a single person (typically, the FRS) to be the lead grievant, but all members of the group must be identified in the grievance.

What is the Typical Format for a Grievance Filing?
Contact your FRS for a sample grievance letter you can use to model your complaint.

Are There Deadlines for Filing a Grievance?
In DoDDS, grievances resulting from a specific action or incident must be filed within 15 days. In DDESS, the deadline is 20 days. Grievances from ongoing situations, such as a problem with your pay that recurs every pay period, are considered to be continuous and are generally not subject to a deadline for filing.

When in doubt, consult your FRS immediately as to whether your situation falls under the 15-day deadline for filing. It is better to err on the side of caution than to miss a deadline.

What Are the Typical Steps in a Grievance Procedure?
Usually, grievances begin with an informal discussion between yourself, your FRS and an administrator. If no resolution can be reached informally, that is when you would submit your written grievance to the administrator.

The administrator should respond within the appropriate time limit. Often this response amounts to the administrator’s rebuttal to your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the administrator’s response, you can request (in writing) elevation of the grievance to the next level.

Be sure to consult your FRS and send a copy of your complete grievance packet to your FEA Area Director and UniServ Attorney. They can advise you on further options.

“Why Does FEA/NEA Protect Bad Teachers?”
We don’t! FEA protects ALL bargaining unit members against attacks on their rights and against discrimination or other unfair treatment. As the nationally-recognized labor organization for DoDEA employees, it is not FEA’s role to determine guilt or innocence – our role is to see that due process and fair treatment, including the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, is afforded to everyone we represent.

Opponents of employee rights sometimes attempt to twist the protection of rights by FEA/NEA into an argument that we purposefully protect bad teachers, or even worse, child abusers. This is a perversion of logic and an insult to supporters of our system of laws.

Need an example? Ask your friends and coworkers. Chances are someone will know a fellow educator who has been falsely accused of child abuse. The majority – the vast majority – of such allegations prove to be false; made up by students to get back at a teacher who disciplined them or did not give them the grade they felt they deserved.

If the accused in such a case is not given the fair hearing he or she deserves, it would be human nature to react solely to the heinous accusation and demand severe punishment. Emotions would trump the truth.

One of FEA/NEA’s primary reasons for existing is to be sure those who are falsely accused of any act receive their fair hearing. FEA does not want bad teachers in our schools anymore than you do, and we certainly do not want child abuse in our schools. But neither do we want innocent educators punished or disciplined unjustly because no one would stand up for their rights.

We are fortunate to live in a country where there is a system of laws to see that the guilty are punished and the innocent are vindicated. FEA/NEA’s role is to make sure that system is not forgotten.

By Roseann Drydale
FEA Europe Area Director

For most FEA members, protection of their rights is the single most important reason for joining the association. Knowing there is someone who will stand up for you if you ever need it is a very good feeling.

FEA employs seven full-time attorneys to serve our members. In addition to two lawyers in FEA’s Washington office, each Area of FEA (Europe, the Pacific, and Stateside) has its own legal staff to service and assist members. These UniServ Attorneys assist with grievances, Unfair Labor Practices, and a myriad of other legal issues affecting our members, as well as provide legal advise to their respective FEA Area Councils.

The legal staff in FEA’s Washington office, led by our Executive Director/General Counsel, directs the overall legal strategy of FEA and handles issues, such as NSPS, affecting the membership as a whole.

The network of FEA staff and leaders – from our General Counsel, to your Area Director, to your District Representative or Local President, to the Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS) in your building – is there to make sure your rights are always protected.
By Linda Callender  
FEA Secretary/Treasurer

We all know that FEA is a responsible organization that safeguards our dues money and works within the guidelines of the Department of Labor, the National Education Association, our parent organization, and FEA governing documents.

The FEA Constitution sets FEA active dues at one percent of Step One of the BA pay lane of Salary Schedule C for DODDS Educators and Specialists. Our annual dues increase is directly correlated to our salary increases.

All dues, NEA, FEA, and Local, are paid to your region (DDESS, Europe and Pacific). NEA dues are then transferred to the FEA Headquarters office which, in turn, pays them to NEA.

A portion of your FEA dues is sent to the FEA Headquarters office to support the State operating budget. That budget is used to support the work that FEA does for DODDS, Europe and the Pacific: arbitration costs, legal services, membership promotions, publications, insurance premiums for all FEA leaders and more.

Each year a state budget is presented at the FEA Annual Membership Meeting. At the first FEA board meeting in the fall, the FEA board of Directors modifies or approves the State budget.

The amount of each regional obligation to the State budget is directly proportionate to its percentage of membership. For example, if the Pacific Area has 27.6 percent of the overall membership of FEA, they pay 27.6 percent of the approved budget amount.

Local associations in DDESS and DoDDS develop autonomous budgets. They control their budgets and determine how their expenditures are handled within guidelines that must conform to NEA, FEA, and Department of Labor requirements regarding the expenditure of membership dues.

FEA works hard for its members. We can all be assured that our dues dollars are used wisely and give us a high return for our individual investments.

Below is an example of how dues dollars were spent at the Headquarters level in accordance with the FEA state budget for SY 2005-2006:

In School Year 2005-2006, FEA Dues were $341.00. From that amount, funds used to support the FEA Headquarters operating budget were $190.51. Below is a breakdown of how the funds from your FEA dues were distributed.
The NEA is the parent organization of FEA and similar affiliates in all 50 states. As such, it supports our association’s efforts through various means, such as training programs for FEA members, leaders and staff; grants and other funding for special programs and initiatives; and lobbying/legislative efforts on behalf of public education everywhere and issues specific to DoDEA schools, such as NSPS and the DDESS Transfer Study.
Democracy In Action

By Chuck McCarter
FEA Europe Area Director

The FEA Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly present a great opportunity for FEA members to be truly involved in the workings of both organizations. These two meetings are held in conjunction every year around the July 4th holiday. The 2006 meetings were held this summer in Orlando, Florida.

We often say that FEA is a unique “state” within NEA and our state meeting is one example. Most states hold their state assemblies earlier in the year; but because of our worldwide structure, we hold ours preceding the NEA RA so that delegates can attend both.

It is the one time a year when members from all three of our areas – Europe, the Pacific, and Stateside – meet to discuss issues, review the budget and plan action for the following year. All members are welcome to attend the FEA annual meeting, take part in the discussions, and hear from our leadership.

The NEA Representative Assembly itself is an incredible example of democracy in action and is truly “member driven”. Approximately 10,000 elected delegates will discuss, debate and vote on the business of the Association. It is an exciting and unique experience to be part of a forum where any elected delegate can address the assembly about the business at hand.

The RA also represents a rare chance for FEA members to network with our colleagues from the 50 states. In the past, this has allowed us to ask for their support in lobbying Congress (our “school board”) on a variety of issues that affect us, especially the so-called NSPS.

The RA is also a chance to hear excellent speakers from wide range of backgrounds. They often include the Teacher or Support Person of the Year, as well as noted leaders in the fields of education and politics. These speakers never fail to inform, excite, and inspire the delegates.

The 2007 RA will be held in Philadelphia, PA, beginning June 29th. Now is a great time to consider running for a position as one of our delegates, either state or local. FEA provides funding to help cover costs for members elected to serve as State Delegates to the RA. In addition, some local associations are able to give a stipend to their delegates. Watch local communications for nomination forms and deadlines.

FEA Leads the Way in Fund Raising at Orlando Meeting

Delegates to this summer’s NEA Representative Assembly went way above and beyond when it came to donations for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

FEA’s group of 31 delegates to the meeting averaged a stunning $645.35 per person in donations made to the NEA Fund during the RA. That compares to $329.38 per delegate from second-place North Dakota.

In addition, the very generous giving from FEA’s delegates, along with additional donations from a number of FEA members not attending the meeting, enabled us to capture the crown for most money raised per delegate from March 1 through the end of the RA. FEA raised $717.61 per delegate in that time period, compared to $466.22 from Delaware, in second place.

All donations made to the NEA Fund by FEA delegates and members are completely voluntary and in no way affect or enhance membership status. Dues money is never used to make political contributions.

The NEA Fund uses the contributions to support pro-public-education candidates and to lobby for educational issues on behalf of NEA members. The extensive lobbying to fight NSPS done by NEA on behalf of FEA members is one example of how the NEA Fund benefits our members.

FEA Journal
By Wanda Herrin Beatty
FEA Human & Civil Rights Coordinator

FEA proudly supports the rights of all bargaining-unit members through an array of programs and services. The FEA Human and Civil Rights (HCR) Program is one specific example of our association working to promote issues of diversity and inclusiveness throughout DoDEA.

The Long Term Goals of the HCR program are to:

a. Increase ethnic–minority representation through the election of ethnic-minority members to local, area, and state offices.
b. Implement on-going leadership training for ethnic-minority members.
c. Continue to meet compliance with NEA 3-1(g) goals and increase ethnic minority participation in all aspects of the Association.
d. Implement an ethnic-minority mentorship program.
e. Increase awareness of ethnic-minority issues within the general FEA membership.

Toward these ends, FEA’s HCR program has sponsored summer training sessions at various FEA Stateside locations the past several years and spring trainings in the Pacific Region. FEA has a network of Regional HCR Coordinators throughout Europe, the Pacific and Stateside to help fulfill the goals of the program stated above.

In addition, the NEA Human and Civil Rights Office has provided FEA and its local associations with assistance and support for Diversity Training and the Minority Leadership Program. NEA has provided excellent Cadre Trainers to assist FEA’s HCR program in fulfilling its charge to our members.

The HCR program will continue to empower FEA members, who in turn will empower students, so that together we will respect different cultures and promote understanding and tolerance among all people. We will continue to expand our multicultural programs in our schools and in the workplace. We encourage you to ask your region’s HCR Coordinator (names are printed in the FEA pocket calendar) about the various caucus groups you can join to become more involved with HCR issues.

Let us renew and build our membership by inviting others to attend meetings and trainings. Minority members should run for FEA office, become delegates to meetings such as the NEA Representative Assembly, and take more interest in their local and regional organizations. Voices cannot be heard and changes cannot be made if you sit back and say, “Someone else will do it”. The responsibility belongs to all of us!

Wanda Herrin Beatty, FEA’s Human and Civil Rights Coordinator, addresses FEA delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly during the annual FEA Minority Affairs Committee meeting, held in conjunction with the FEA Annual Membership Meeting.
Probationary Teachers

It Can Feel Like You’re Walking a Minefield – Never Certain When a Misstep Could Spell Disaster for Your Budding Career As an Educator. However, There Are Steps You Can Take To Feel Like You Have More Answers Than Questions.

By Jan Amend
FEA Pacific Area Director

Being a probationary teacher can be a frightening experience. The two-year probationary period in DoDEA can feel a bit like the longest job interview of your life.

There is a myth that FEA is unable to provide any services or assistance to probationary teachers. This is simply not true. If an FEA member is wrongfully dismissed during her/his probationary period because of discrimination or a violation by management of prohibited personnel practices, FEA can challenge the dismissal.

FEA can also assist with common problems such as incorrect pay, violations of the collective bargaining agreement, or other violations of applicable laws and regulations.

And, of course, as an FEA member, a probationary teacher has full access to the wide range of FEA/NEA Member Benefits programs and services.

While FEA questions the appropriateness and legitimacy of using some of the factors listed herein, nevertheless, we want to share with you information on what school administrators might use in evaluating probationary employees.

On this page are some points probationary teachers should keep in mind in order to maximize their chances for success throughout their careers in DoDEA.

What are the standards that pertain to your area of expertise?
Especially for Middle and High School teachers, you want to know what your subject standards are, work on a syllabus that aligns with this set of standards and be able to demonstrate your inclusion of this when you are observed.

Do you know what your principal wants, when he/she comes for a classroom observation?
If you meet with him/her before the announced observation, you will probably be given a planning sheet detailing what will be covered in your observation session. This is an excellent time to find out what will be observed and rated.

At various times during the year, ask your principal, “How am I doing? Am I performing in a fully successful manner?” This allows you time to ask for help or make modifications.

Do you have an effective plan for managing student behavior in class?
Classroom control is an essential part of success. You may admire a teacher on staff that you see has this ability. Ask for tips from him/her.

Do you meet the deadlines that are set for teachers (i.e., have you produced your behavior plan, or grading policy)?
By using a grade book with all deadlines written in, or using the calendar function, you can stay on top of these details. Your team leader, department chair, FR/FRS, principal or assistant principal should be able to fill you in on what details are necessary to satisfy these requirements.

Attitude is a big, but unspoken issue. If you think a policy or decision is wrong, go to your FRS and ask him/her to raise the complaint for you.

Please,
rely on fellow teachers you trust and/or ask your FR/FRS.
We all want you to succeed, too!
Have a great year!

If you are an elementary teacher, do you have all the necessary information on procedures for picking up/dropping off your students at specials, lunches, recess, before school, after school, buses, and fire drills?
If you have special duties, i.e., recess, you will want to know exactly what the expectations are for recess monitoring.

If a child is injured on the playground, what do you do? What are your instructions if a child misbehaves severely enough that you feel he/she needs to be disciplined.

You should be informed about what you are allowed to do or not allowed to do. What is the escalating policy for repeat misbehavior and what are your options?
Especially with discipline, take care that children are not touched inappropriately.

Your school should provide information on such policies. If you have any questions about them, be sure to ask your FRS or principal.
The Stateside Region of FEA represents certified bargaining unit members and is the only region to represent Educational Support Professionals (ESPs). The ESPs represented by Stateside are located at West Point, Camp Lejeune, Fort Knox, Fort Campbell, Fort Stewart, and Robins Air Force Base.

The support units were consolidated at the same time as the teacher units were. Currently FEA Stateside is negotiating a master labor agreement with DDESS to include pay, benefits, leave, and other terms and conditions of employment for ESPs.

Negotiating a contract is a lengthy process that should not be rushed. The bargaining teams will meet again in the new bargaining unit. It is a source of great pride that the Stateside Region represents ESPs. They include educational aides, secretaries, office automation clerks, supply clerks, custodians, maintenance workers, payroll technicians, administrative technologists, motor vehicle operators, ROTC instructors, education technicians, budget analysts, logistics support clerks, material handlers, and accounting technicians. The support personnel are the teachers’ and students’ greatest allies and assistants! They strive daily to make the educational setting one of excellence for each of us.

In Stateside our certified and classified members support each other and care about each other. All work together to ensure outstanding education and facilities for our most precious commodity – our students!

The strength of FEA comes from the unity of its members. Whether ESP or certified, Stateside or overseas; FEA stands with you to protect your rights and ensure quality working conditions.

These and more resources are available through the NEA ESP Web site at www.nea.org/esp/home/

The ESP List is an E-mail discussion list (a “listserv”) open to all NEA members and staff. List members use the list to talk about issues that concern education support professionals within the NEA, such as contracting out, bargaining problems, training needs, and questions about how improve and strengthen the Association. www.nea.org/esp/home/members/esplist.html

Sample ESP Local Association Web site: NEA has created a sample Web site as a starting point to help local Associations create their own Web sites. You can look at the site online to get ideas for your own site, and you can download a complete copy of the sample site, which you can modify to create your local Association’s site. www.nea.org/esp/home/sample/

ESP: Building A Quality Workforce Series. This new publication series highlights the challenges members of each ESP job group face as they work to build a quality workforce – including job descriptions, downsizing, health and safety issues, and professional development. www.nea.org/esp/home/jobs/


Educational Support Personnel: Exclusive NEA Member Benefits Programs details benefits available to NEA members and provides an option to request more information about the listed benefits. www.nea.org/esp/home/nearesources/esp-member-benefits.html

Job Descriptions Do’s and Don’ts outlines the importance of having a job description. www.nea.org/esp/home/nearesources/jobdodon.html

Job Evaluations Do’s and Don’ts can prepare ESPs for the work assessment process. www.nea.org/esp/home/nearesources/jobeval.html

For more information on any of the publications below, or to obtain printed copies, e-mail ESPProgram@nea.org or call 202-822-7131.
Working For You: A Closer Look At So

FEA: Keeping Members Informed

Whether it's updating you on bargaining issues with DoDEA, making sure you are informed about the latest developments with NSPS, or sharing teaching tips from your fellow educators, FEA and NEA have a broad range of communications tools at their disposal to keep our members in the know.

- Electronic Updates such as the FEA President’s Reports, Legal Updates on specific issues affecting our members, and similar bulletins from FEA Area Directors appraise our members of developments in their local areas and throughout DoDEA. Members can sign up to have the FEA President’s Report sent directly to them via E-mail.

- Publications such as area newsletters, the FEA Journal, and NEA Today are available exclusively to FEA members, proving news, advice and professional development information you can use everyday to boost your performance.

- NEA’s site www.nea.org is a one-stop Web portal for employees and supporters of public education, with hundreds of links and articles on professional development and other issues important to you. NEA Member Benefits www.neamb.com provides descriptions of all its programs, financial calculators and other helpful tools, and monthly giveaways for members through its site.

- FEA and NEA provide informative Web sites with exclusive members-only materials. FEA’s site www.feaonline.org includes salary information, copies of MOUs and other legal advice, and archives of information updates, among many other features. All you need is a member ID number (printed on copies of the FEA Journal and NEA Today sent to members, or send a request to fea@feaonline.org) and your last name to gain access to the members-only information.

Of course, the most important source of communication comes from your local association representatives. Your Local President, Faculty Representative Spokesperson (FRS), or District Representative can provide you with the answers you are looking for or get you in touch with someone who can.

FEA’s goal is to make sure our members have the information they want and need, when they want and need it. As an FEA member, you can tap into our information network at any time simply by contacting your local, district or area FEA representative, or by contacting FEA’s Washington office:

FEA
1201 16th St. NW, Suite 117
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-7850
fea@feaonline.org

Protecting Your Salary and Benefits

FEA represents two distinct school systems – DDESS and DoDDS – with two distinct methods for determining salaries. In both systems, however, FEA works diligently to see that our members’ pay remains attractive.

In DDESS, salaries for faculty and staff are negotiated. For educators, salaries are set as part of the Master Labor Agreement (MLA) which covers all teaching positions. Pay for ESPs is currently determined at each base by the local’s contract, although work toward an ESP Master Labor Agreement is progressing steadily.

As in most public school districts, DDESS negotiations are a relatively straight-forward process, with both sides meeting periodically as part of the contract negotiation process to set salary amounts. DoDDS faculty, however, have a much more intricate system for determining their salaries.

By law, DoDDS salaries are based on the average pay for education employees from school districts in the U.S. that are located in urban areas with a minimum population of 100,000. Presently, there are roughly 240 such school districts.

In order to determine the average salaries (for classroom teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists and speech pathologists) for all of those districts, salary figures from each must be collected each year. This is the job of the Department of Defense Wage & Salary Division (WSD).

The WSD collects the most recent salary data each school year and uses that information to compute average minimum and maximum pay rates for each pay lane (Bachelors, Bachelors +15, Bachelors +30, Masters, Masters +15, Masters +30, and Doctorate). That data is then used to set the DoDDS salary scales.

FEA monitors the process by conducting an independent collection of data from urban districts within the sample group. The data FEA collects is used to confirm the accuracy of the WSD data. Any discrepancies found in the data are reported to WSD for resolution.

This system was instituted by Congress in the 1960s in order to make DoDDS salaries competitive with those of U.S. school employees. FEA is constantly examining new interpretations of the law, in search of new formulations that will boost salaries. Currently, we are working closely with NEA in their efforts to boost starting salaries for all teachers to $40,000. Such an improvement would have clear benefits for FEA members by increasing the salaries used to compute DoDDS pay.

As always, FEA will continue to pursue all available avenues to improve compensation and benefits, both in DoDDS and DDESS.

Protecting the present level of salaries and benefits while constantly seeking new ways to improve them is one of FEA’s oldest and most important functions.
FEA Safeguards Transfer Program

The question is often asked: “How does FEA benefit me?” The role the association plays in monitoring the DoDSS Transfer Program is a great example. By working together and sharing information between all levels of the organization, FEA members, association leaders, and the FEA staff in Washington have been successful in pushing for substantive improvements in how the Transfer Program operates and how vacancies are filled in DoDSS.

On the organizational level, FEA has successfully lobbied DoDEA to make major improvements to the way the Transfer Program operates. Building principals can no longer list as many teaching categories as they like for vacancies. Instead, the principals are limited to three categories per vacancy, resulting in much more realistic demands for prospective transferees to meet.

Many other important improvements, such as delaying consideration of local available candidates for vacancies until the transfer round is completed (rather than prior to the transfer round) and recommending that DoDSS offer a cash award to encourage educators who are retiring to complete their retirement paperwork prior to the start of the transfer round (to create more vacancies for the Transfer Program) have also been implemented in recent years thanks to the efforts of the FEA President.

Closer to the school level, the network of FEA Local Presidents, Faculty Representative Spokespersons (FRSs), District Representatives, and Area Directors do an incredible job tracking vacancies on behalf of their members.

These FEA leaders monitor position openings to see that appropriate vacancies are added to the Transfer Program. They also work with their local and area counterparts in DoDSS to resolve problems and make sure that vacancies are reported accurately and with realistic requirements for transferees. If they are unable to resolve problems at their level, these local FEA watchdogs alert the FEA Washington office to the problems and attempts are made to resolve them at the headquarters level.

The interconnectedness and communication between the various levels of the association makes sure that the Transfer Program procedures are being followed at all levels. Additionally, FEA supplies its members with valuable “Tips for Transfers” to explain the application process and maximize your chances of getting the assignment you want.

Another important transfer service FEA provides to its members is verification that members’ transfer applications are included in the printed transfer group lists that are used in each transfer round.

FEA members can rest assured knowing they have someone at the table throughout the Transfer Program to see that things are running according to the program guidelines and that, if mistakes are made (as is unavoidable in any program of this scale), they are identified and addressed quickly and appropriately.

Liability Insurance Covers You

What if an event involving you causes property damage or bodily injury while you are at work, either on school grounds or at a school function? Personal liability insurance will not pick up that risk – you need professional liability insurance for this purpose.

The NEA for years has recognized the importance of having such protection – so much so, that the Educators Employment Liability (EEL) insurance contract is just one of many benefits of membership provided at no additional cost to the member.

Among other things, this policy protects you in most instances if a student or a student’s parents sue you. It also reimburses you if your personal property is damaged in assault-related incidents. The education activities must be directly related to the member’s school/institution.

The four types of coverage provided by the EEL contract are as follows:

Coverage A - Educators Liability (Civil)
- Payment of the legal costs of defending civil proceedings (other than proceedings concerning Civil Rights) brought against a member in the course of their work as an educator, and up to $1 million per member per occurrence in damages assessed against the member as a result of such proceedings
- Up to $300,000 per member per occurrence for civil rights claims only
- Coverage is subject to a $3 million per occurrence aggregate for all claims

Coverage B - Reimbursement of Attorney Fees for Defense of a Criminal Proceeding
- Reimbursement for attorney fees and other legal costs up to $35,000 if the member is charged with violating a criminal statute in the course of their employment as an educator, and they are exonerated from these charges (State insurance laws do not permit this coverage in New York State.)

Coverage C - Bail Bond
- Reimbursement up to $1,000 of bail bond premium if the member must post a bond as the result of an occurrence arising from their employment as an educator (State insurance laws do not permit this coverage in Kentucky and Wisconsin.)

Coverage D - Assault-Related Personal Property Damage
- Payment of up to $500 for damage to a member’s personal property when caused by an assault upon them in the course of their employment as an educator (State insurance laws do not permit this coverage in New York State.)

This policy is an occurrence policy, which means that claims arising from covered acts that occur during the contract period are covered no matter when the claim is made. The EEL policy covers criminal and civil rights cases, but not cases arising out of the discharge or layoff of a member or involving other “job rights” issues. These types of cases are covered by the Kate Frank-DuShane Unified Legal Services Program. This policy pays its benefits when other sources of insurance (e.g., a school district professional liability policy) are exhausted.
Life Insurance Programs*

NEA DUES-TAB® Insurance — Free coverage for eligible members: Up to $50,000 in accidental death and dismemberment insurance and a $150,000 benefit for death due to unlawful homicide while on the job.

NEA Group Term Life Insurance Plan — Economical decreasing term life insurance protection of up to $300,000 for NEA members and their families. Dependent coverage also available.

NEA AD&D Insurance Plan — You can cover your entire family with accidental death and dismemberment insurance. You can choose from plans with rates starting at $19 per year and coverage options for up to $500,000.

NEA Guaranteed Issue Life Plan — For NEA members and their spouses ages 50 and over. No medical exam. You cannot be turned down for coverage.

NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance Plan — Up to $250,000 of decreasing term life insurance with a premium that won’t change until age 70. Receive a special 20% discount when you purchase a minimum of $40,000 or $100,000, depending on your age.

NEA Joint Protection Life Insurance* — Life insurance benefits of up to $300,000 with optional spouse coverage.

NEA Preferred Term Life Plan — A level premium/level benefit for 10, 15, or 20-year term life insurance with options of $100,000, $250,000, $500,000, and $750,000.

Loan and Mortgage Programs

NEA National Board Certification Loan* — A low cost loan designed to help cover the assessment fee for National Board Certification.

NEA Home Financing Program* — Get a new mortgage, refinance, or take out a home equity loan. Great rates, superior service, a quick application, and a decision within minutes. “NEA Getaway” member bonus with new mortgages and refinances.

NEA Personal Loan* — Apply for a competitive rate, no collateral loan with credit lines from $3,000 to $25,000.† Use the money for almost any purpose — bill consolidation,† tuition or home improvements.

Savings, Deposit and Investment Programs

NEA-Sponsored Money Market Account* — Consistently offers some of the highest yields in the nation with easy access to your funds. FDIC-insured up to $100,000 per depositor. Member FDIC.

NEA-Sponsored CD* — Consistently offers some of the highest yields in the nation. FDIC-insured up to $100,000 per depositor. Terms from 6 to 60 months. Member FDIC.

Health and Disability Insurance Programs

NEA MemberCare® In-Hospital Plan — Two options to help you pay the “extra” expenses associated with a hospital stay and the recovery period afterwards.

NEA Income Protection* Plan — Helps replace your income if you are out of work due to illness or injury.

NEA MemberCare® Long-Term Care Insurance Program — Provides financial support in paying for necessary long-term care services like nursing home, home health care, and assisted living care.

NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program* — Coverage for hospital and medical expenses not covered by Medicare after age 65. Includes a discount package. Hard-to-beat prices. Choose your own doctor. No health questions.

NEA MemberCare® Critical Illness Benefit — Protection against financial disaster caused by catastrophic illness. Pays a lump-sum benefit upon first diagnosis of a wide array of critical conditions.

Credit Card Programs

NEA Credit Card Program*** — Superior benefits exclusive to NEA members with the NEA WorldPoints® Credit Card. Benefits to members include no annual fee; travel, merchandise, and cash rewards; low introductory rates; and competitive variable interest rates.

Free Member Education Guides

Homeowners Insurance

Tax-Deferred Annuities

Healthy, Wealthy, & Wise

Managing Credit

A Shopper’s Guide To Long-Term Care Insurance

Understanding Your Disability Income Protection Needs

Understanding Medicare and Medicare Supplement Insurance

A Consumer Guide to Credit Cards

Note: Some programs are not available in all states.

* Provided by the NEA Members Insurance Trust.

**You may contact the issuer and administrator of this program, MBNA America Bank, to request specific information about the costs associated with these credit cards by calling 1-800-468-7632 or writing to P.O. Box 15020, Wilmington, DE 19850. Certain restrictions apply. MBNA, the MBNA logo, the tree design, and WorldPoints® are service marks of MBNA America Bank, N.A.

††MBNA may prohibit the use of an NEA Personal Loan account to pay off or pay down any MBNA® account.

For more information, call toll free: 1-800-637-4636

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET. Spanish speaking representatives available.
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)
Thank You!

(from left) Nancy Clinton, Roseann Drydale, Debra Degalis and Brian Chance led all FEA delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly in funds they contributed to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Each contributed over $1,000 toward the NEA Fund, which promotes pro-public-education candidates and NEA issues. All money raised for the NEA Fund comes from voluntary contributions; dues money is never used to make political contributions.