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News Release

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Federal Education Association Decries DoDEA Director's Reckless Cuts to Education

Plans by DoDEA Director Dr. Shirley Miles to slash kindergarten instructors and Middle School teachers, while hiring over 150 unnecessary new administrators, are reckless and dangerous to the quality of education offered in DoDEA schools, according to Federal Education Association President Michael Priser, speaking on behalf of the association.

In a series of memos released to DoDEA staff this week, Miles outlined plans to drastically increase the Pupil to Teacher (PTR) ratio in DoDEA Middle Schools from the current 16:1 ratio to a new standard of 25:1 – an increase in class size of more than 50 percent!

Miles also announced that she was reducing the PTR in Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) classes to 18:1, from the current 29:1. However, while every FDK class currently is authorized to have a classroom aide to assist in instruction, Miles would no longer authorize aides for any classes at the new 18:1 ratio.

“FEA finds this move to be completely deceptive,” Priser says. “Dr. Miles would like parents of kindergarteners to think she is promoting education by lowering the PTR. But by getting rid of the classroom aides in most of the kindergarten classes Dr. Miles is actually reducing the amount of face-to-face contact students will have with a qualified instructor.”

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FEA Decries Cuts to DoDEA Quality of Education (continued)

“Instead of having 2 instructors serving a maximum of 29 students, as is the current standard, Dr. Miles wants to make 18 kindergarteners dependent upon just one teacher to get all the instruction and attention they need,” Priser says. “We find this to be the exact opposite of an improvement for students.”

Incredibly, while drastically increasing the Middle School PTR – a move that will eliminate over 350 qualified teachers throughout DoDEA worldwide – and cutting instructional aides in kindergarten, Dr. Miles announced the creation of nearly 160 new “Resource Manager” positions for DoDEA schools with at least 250 students. She claims these positions are necessary to help principals in various logistical and financial school requirements, such as facilities management, student transportation, and handling supplies and materials.

Says Priser: “FEA would like to know why these Resource Manager positions are necessary when many of these schools already have one or more assistant principals who are supposed to be handling these very jobs. That Dr. Miles would cut instructional staff while adding to an already bloated administration is unjustifiable.”

“It is an established fact in education that smaller class sizes and more direct contact with qualified instructors, especially at an early age, is crucial for educational success,” says Priser. “Cutting 350 teaching positions and eliminating instructional aides for kindergarteners, all so DoDEA can hire another batch of redundant administrators, will result in less instructional time for each student. We feel it is reckless and dangerous to the quality of education our schools are proudly known for offering. ”

“Our military families, and especially our students, deserve better.”

With well over 5,000 members, the Federal Education Association (FEA) is the leading advocate for educators and classroom excellence throughout DoDEA. The association was founded in Germany in 1956 and now represents faculty and staff in Europe, Asia and Stateside.