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News Release

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Federal Education Association Proposes Public Meetings on DoDEA Class Size Increases, Staffing Changes

The Federal Education Association is proposing a series of public meetings with FEA President Michael Priser and DoDEA Director Dr. Shirley Miles to give DoDEA stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about and comment on proposals by DoDEA to significantly increase class sizes and change staffing in its schools.

“The amount of confusion and uncertainty over Dr. Miles’ plans is unhealthy for everyone concerned,” says Priser. “We feel that holding meetings throughout the DoDEA community would allow everyone to hear directly from Dr. Miles what she is proposing, why she is proposing it, and what impact she expects those changes to have on our schools.”

“Such meetings would also allow DoDEA stakeholders to hear directly from FEA about our concerns over these proposed changes,” Priser says. “Most importantly, it would give those stakeholders an opportunity to ask their own questions and share their own opinions prior to any decisions being made.”

In late April,, Dr. Miles released three memos to her staff, outlining her proposals for the following changes:

- Increasing the Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in DoDEA classrooms from the current 16;1 to a new level of 25:1
- Eliminating full-time dedicated classroom aides from full-day kindergarten classes in DoDEA while also lowering the PTR for those classes.
- Creating 159 new “Resource Manager” positions in DoDEA schools of 250 students or more.

- more -

Federal Education Association Proposes Public Meetings on DoDEA Class Size Increases, Staffing Changes (continued)

FEA has concerns/questions about each of these proposals.

- The change in middle school PTR would result in much larger class sizes than is presently the case.
- The change in kindergarten staffing would create smaller class sizes, but would endanger children and hurt the educational environment by eliminating a second adult in the classroom to help look after the children.
- The Resource Manager positions are completely unnecessary, as the duties they would be assigned are already handled by other DoDEA employees. Furthermore, the creation of those Resource Manager positions seems to be funded by the elimination of classroom staff via the changes to middle school and kindergarten staff outlined above.

“Let’s have an open and honest discussion about these proposed changes,” Priser says. “We hope Dr. Miles agrees that changes of this magnitude deserve careful consideration and input from the people who will be most affected – the students and military families – prior to implementing anything.”

No details on dates or locations for the proposed meetings have been worked out yet, pending Dr. Miles’ response to FEA’s invitation, which was extended to her on May 17. FEA’s suggestion is to hold one or more meetings in each DoDEA area (Europe, the Pacific and Stateside) during the fall of 2009. No changes to staffing should be implemented before those meetings are held and the feedback can be considered.

“I’m confident we would get a lot of parents and students, as well as educators, to attend these meetings so they can decide for themselves whether Dr. Miles’ plans have merit,” Priser says.

To learn more about these issues, go to www.feaonline.org/sos

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.