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News Release

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DODEA PLAN TO HIRE RESOURCE MANAGERS MAY REQUIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS SIZES TO GROW – FEA CALLS FOR HALT UNTIL CLASS SIZE ISSUE IS RESOLVED

DoDEA's rush to hire 159 new Resource Managers could make increasing middle school class sizes a necessity and should be delayed until after a decision on the class size issue is made next year, the Federal Education Association said today in a letter to the DoDEA Director.

In a letter to Dr. Shirley Miles, Director of DoDEA, FEA President Michael Priser urged caution in filling the newly-created Resource Manager positions at this time.

“Filling these Resource Manager positions will encumber between \$8 and \$10 million of DoDEA's budget next year,” Priser's letter reads. “Those are funds that may prove the difference between being able to maintain – or even decrease – class sizes in DoDEA middle schools when you make your determination next year.”

Dr. Miles announced the creation of the Resource Manager positions this spring, along with plans to increase middle school class sizes and to cut full-time instructional aides for DoDEA full-day kindergarten classes that were to have their class sizes lowered.

The public release of Dr. Miles' plans brought strongly negative reactions from FEA and members of the public, especially DoDEA parents, leading Dr. Miles to announce last month that the full-time aides will remain in all kindergarten classes. The decision on whether to increase middle school class sizes was delayed until after the 2009-2010 school year because Dr. Miles said she wants to create a task force to advise her on the issue. No information has been made available thus far by Dr. Miles about who will be on the task force or how its independence in decision-making can be guaranteed since she is appointing all the task force members.

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DODEA PLAN TO HIRE RESOURCE MANAGERS MAY REQUIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS SIZES TO GROW – FEA CALLS FOR HALT UNTIL CLASS SIZE ISSUE IS RESOLVED (continued)

Priser’s letter points out that deciding now to spend millions of dollars on new positions may effectively decide the fate of the middle school class sizes. He urged careful consideration before creating any new non-classroom positions in DoDEA, particularly at a time when the quality of education in DoDEA middle schools is threatened by the possibility of class size increases.

“There is no reason to rush a decision of this magnitude, particularly when it has the potential to make cutting middle school staff (and, thereby, increasing middle school class sizes) a necessity, rather than an option to be considered,” Priser’s letter reads. “Creating and filling 159 new administrative positions in the space of just a few months, while leaving the fate of middle school class sizes in limbo for a full year, gives the appearance of misplaced priorities.”

“Since you have indicated you will make no decisions about possible increases in DoDEA middle school class sizes until a year from now, FEA believes the hiring of these Resource Managers requires equal consideration and caution,” Priser says in his letter.

With over 5,400 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.