



## October 2023 Newsletter

**Recent Visits to Fort Novosel, Maxwell, Fort Knox, and Quantico** — This month, I had the distinct privilege of touring DoDEA schools located on Fort Novosel, Maxwell, Fort Knox, and Quantico. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to local leaders Angela Shlam, Deborah Parks, Loretta Sheppard, Letetia Kidd, Wanda Merritt, and Jennifer Kaysak. Their insightful tours, introductions to members and administrators, and coordination of afterschool membership meetings – some of which extended beyond two hours – were invaluable. These visits offered me a deeper understanding of each school's unique environment and were a wonderful opportunity to connect with you, our hard working members, who are in the trenches and dealing with DoDEA on a daily basis. Unfortunately my schedule prevented an

afterschool meeting at Maxwell; however, I anticipate a return visit to meet with MEA members.





**Energetic and Authentic Discussions with Dr. Minor and Mr. Bull** — The Fall Area Council Meeting was held on September 29-30 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Before the meeting, I worked with presidents and used the results of the first-ever FEA-SR Membership Survey to develop a comprehensive meeting agenda. On Friday, we had energetic, passionate, and authentic conversations with Dr. Minor and Mr. Bull about the concerns and issues we face in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Guam. We did not get through the entire agenda but those leftover items are being addressed with the October 2023 Newsletter Agency. On Saturday, we appreciated hearing from Richard Tarr, Brian Chance, Chad Jimison, and Teresa Brown from FEA. We also enjoyed listening to our guest speaker, Kay Stuertz, who founded FEA- SR and served as FEA-SR's first director. [41 pages of meeting minutes](#) were taken by my executive assistant, Laura Hastings, and were posted on the FEA-SR Website for your convenience. Planning for the in-person Spring Area Council Meeting is currently underway.

**Enough Is Enough! A Call for Strong Union Action on Student Violence** —

Although some schools are not dealing with this issue right now, many schools in DoDEA Americas are facing violent and aggressive assaults on teachers and students that are often ongoing, unaddressed, and lead to bodily harm. Members have suffered a broken arm, nose, hand, toe, leg as they have been kicked, punched, bitten, choked, violently shoved into desks and chairs, headbutted, slapped, scratched, and had their earrings ripped off their ears. Members have suffered dental injuries requiring oral surgery, concussions, traumatic brain injuries, and permanent hearing loss. Members have been frightened and traumatized having developed chronic and possibly lifelong PTSD, severe depression and anxiety, and others. It is NOT acceptable for educators to fear going to work because they could get attacked or beaten up by a student. It is NOT acceptable for DoDEA management to continue placing educators in unsafe situations that could lead to bodily harm. It is NOT acceptable that other students have to witness attacks and assaults (sometimes as recipients of the violence themselves) only to have their education interrupted. It is NOT acceptable that DoDEA often fails to notify Command and hold parents accountable for their children's constantly disruptive and/or violent behavior. Student aggression hurts students and staff physically and/or emotionally, and it is past time for DoDEA to update its policies and procedures, ensure their own compliance, and protect everyone from harm. **EDUCATORS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO FEAR COMING TO SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY MIGHT GET ATTACKED BY A STUDENT. THE REST OF THE CLASS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO LOSE INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND BE FEARFUL (TRAUMATIZED) WHILE ANOTHER STUDENT IS ATTACKING OTHERS. WAKE UP, DODEA MANAGEMENT! YOU NEED TO PROTECT ALL STUDENTS AND PROTECT US!**

When bargaining unit members are threatened or attacked, local presidents file a health and safety notification letter to the community and district superintendents. For severe and/or recurring issues that are not being corrected, I will elevate the

health and safety letters to Dr. Minor and Mr. Brady. Although it is critical for health and safety letters to continue as our means of documentation and reporting, the time for action is past due. But it will require all of us (not just a few members) standing together as a union. There is power and strength in numbers and we need to stand in solidarity. To that end, FEA-SR is writing a report on the unaddressed and escalating student violence in our schools. We will be sending the report and contacting government officials, multiple times if necessary, to request meetings and a full-blown investigation into DoDEA management's systemic failures concerning student violence. [FEA-SR has created a Google Form inviting you to submit your stories](#). The form does ask for your name, installation, and email address; however, this is only so we can contact you for follow-up information or action if needed. Your information will NOT be shared without your explicit written consent. What needs to be triggered is an investigation similar to the DoD Inspector General investigation that led to [this report](#).

**FEA-SR is Enforcing Bargaining Rights** — When the Agency changes working conditions, such as implementing new requirements, the Agency is required under federal law and Article 7 of the MLA to notify the Union and give us an opportunity to bargain the change(s). Bargaining is synonymous with negotiating, and it allows the Union and DoDEA to agree on the procedures the Agency will use when implementing the change, and arrangements to mitigate any negative impacts on employees. I am waiting to hear back on bargaining requests I submitted for the phonics assessments and data tracker, new K-5 Math resources (Reveal Math and Numbers Worlds), and Literacy Content Area Model Units and Formative Assessments. Failing to honor a union's valid bargaining request is not only a contractual violation (grievance) but is also unlawful that could lead to the filing of a Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge. I will keep members updated on bargaining progress. I do hope the Agency comes to the bargaining table to collaborate on

these changes for the sake of clarity on expectations and fairness to members and students. It helps DoDEA's mission when they work with FEA-SR.

**Arbitration Victory and Debt Letter Reminder** — Although it was announced via email, I wanted to remind members of this important win for FEA-SR. In a recent decision, an arbitrator ruled in our favor involving multiple grievances filed over DoDEA's debt collection practices. The Arbitrator found that DoDEA violated the MLA, the Debt Collection Act, and applicable regulations by failing to properly explain alleged debts and by failing to afford bargaining unit employees the required due process before beginning involuntary wage garnishment. For the eight educators involved in the arbitration, that means they will receive thousands of dollars in back pay and interest. (Imagine that!) At the arbitration, FEA-SR argued that the frequency of DoDEA's payroll errors will require systemic repair. To curb the frequency of these errors, the arbitrator ordered DoDEA to update ALL bargaining unit employees' Leave and Earnings Statements (LES) to provide more clarity so that educators can identify errors before they become a major problem. DoDEA is now required to include a clear narrative explanation in the remarks section of the LES any time there is a change in an employee's regular bi-weekly pay or anytime there is any additional payment or deduction from an employee's regular pay. DoDEA is also required to include a designated contact name and number on the LES to contact with questions regarding any deduction. While the award of back pay currently extends only to the eight witnesses at the hearing, it opens the door for FEA-SR to pursue many more pay grievances that have already been filed as well as future grievances filed over the collection of alleged overpayments. This makes it even more important that if you receive a debt letter from DFAS to closely follow the instructions in the [Responding to Alleged Debts](#) packet found on the FEA-SR website. FEA-SR will continue to fight for DoDEA to refund any money collected for unexplained debts until the Agency fixes its broken payroll system!

**Classified and Certified MLA Bargaining Progress** — Over three years since DoDEA opened the ESP/classified MLA for renegotiation, FEA-SR and DoDEA will officially begin bargaining a new MLA on November 27, 2023. The bargaining team consisting of Lee Gladden, Wendy Russell, Wanda Merritt, and Curtis White are currently preparing for negotiations with our attorney, Ben Hunter. Meanwhile, earlier this week on October 17, 2023, Ben and I had a productive conversation with DoDEA HQ in which we discussed ground rules for bargaining a successor certified MLA (successor to the 2005 and 2019 bogus MLAs). Updated proposals were recently sent to the Agency for review.

**Recent ESP Events** — 1) FEA-SR welcomed all interested classified dues-paying members to join an initial meeting for the ESP Bargaining Workgroup, a brand new initiative that had its first meeting on October 19, 2023. The Workgroup serves as an advisory group to research information, act as a lifeline, offer support, suggestions, recommendations, and other feedback to the Bargaining Team that will be negotiating a new classified MLA with DoDEA management. The details are being worked out, so stay tuned for more information from your local ESP president. 2) On October 5, 2023, Keyth Harrison from NEA led a team building session at Fort Campbell. Dr. Minor, Mr. Bull, and Mr. McKinnon attended with members. Congratulations to Ms. Lee and FCNCEA for organizing this opportunity! 3) On October 3, 2023, FEA Human and Civil Rights (HCR) Coordinator Michael Johnson gave a wonderful presentation and training on HCR history and the HCR network to all ESP presidents, vice presidents, and HCR coordinators. This opportunity was arranged by FEA ESP Coordinator Teresa Brown, who said, “We cannot wait for our next training with Michael. It was such a learning experience!”

**EDA Reminders** — 1) Please do NOT sign an incomplete or blank EDA contract. You need to be sure of all the terms before you sign. 2) If there is an extracurricular activity you are interested in and it is unlisted, you may submit a recommendation

for the unlisted activity to your supervisor. It is within the Agency's discretion whether to approve the activity. 3) EDAs are open to all bargaining unit employees, and school year or extracurricular assignments are to be made on a fair and equitable basis in accordance with the MLA.

**Inappropriate ISS Directives** — To quote a member, “Our ISS gives training that is meaningless and useless and continues to add new things that must be done that only works to justify their job or someone above the school level, and it takes away much needed and important planning and prep time that teachers should have to really allow them to focus on their kids.” While ISSs have great intentions, FEA-SR has become aware that some ISSs may be attempting to direct/assign work and “create” expectations for educators. This has been an off-and-on problem for years and should not be happening because an ISS is in place to provide support and recommendations, not act as a quasi-administrator. It is unfair to both the Agency and FEA-SR members who are having to field directives from multiple people, directives that could potentially conflict with each other and cause further confusion. If this is happening, let the Union know so we can address the problem with our POCs. Also, remember that CSI-related directives and tasks should come from the Agency and not the CSI team. See below from Article 7 of the MLA.

### **Knowledge is Power: Know Your MLA Rights (Certified)**

Article 7, Section 1(c) of the Certified MLA states:

“While groups / committees / subcommittees make recommendations, it is understood that any decision regarding the approval and/or implementation of such recommendation rests solely with the Agency. As adopted recommendations move forward the Administrator and the elected FEA-SR Representatives should jointly discuss a plan for implementing the recommendations in accordance with Section 4 of Article 10. The time, training, and resources needed should be identified in a timeline/calendar outlined to establish reasonable expectations. The plan that is



developed should be documented in writing.”

### **Knowledge is Power: Know Your MLA Rights (Classified)**

Article 12, Section 2 (“Student Discipline”) of the Classified MLA states:

“Each bargaining unit member who is responsible for carrying out the Agency’s student discipline policy shall be provided copies (hard copy or electronic) of the Agency’s policies, guidelines, and regulations concerning pupil behavior and discipline and, on an annual basis, will be provided information and guidance on school discipline procedures.”

**Dues Deductions** — Welcome to our new members of FEA-SR and welcome back to our returning members! Dues deductions will be paid in 15 equal installments. The effective date was October 8, 2023 (pay date October 27, 2023). Dues deductions will end with the May 4, 2024 pay period (pay date May 10, 2024). It is imperative that you check your LES to ensure that dues are being deducted properly. Members will be responsible for paying any missed dues deductions. To help you monitor dues being deducted, FEA-SR will send at least one bi-weekly reminder to check your LES. This was an effective strategy over the past two years, which saved many members from the financial hardship of having to pay for dues deductions that were erroneously missed. Thank you in advance for your diligence.

**Don’t Miss Out on NEW Online Membership Meetings and Webinars** — On October 11, 2023, nearly 80 members attended FEA-SR’s inaugural stateside-wide online membership meeting. The event spanned over an hour, and it was decided that we will host monthly meetings. On October 17, 2023, we hosted our first in a series of webinars for members featuring Michael Gavin from NEA who discussed the various benefits and financial discounts that we are entitled to as union members through [www.neamb.com/start](http://www.neamb.com/start). You can also call 1-800-637-4636. In addition, FEA-SR Webmaster Annitra Smith-Lincoln took members through the online resources available on [www.fea-stateside.org](http://www.fea-stateside.org), with a reminder to contact her

at [stateside.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:stateside.webmaster@gmail.com) for any email or website access problems.

**Thank You to Quantico President Jennifer Kaysak** — Unfortunately, I am having to take medical leave during the week of October 23-27, 2023. The Area Council approved a new policy allowing for a designee and approved my recommendation that Jennifer Kaysak, President of the Quantico Education Association, serve as Acting FEA Director for DDESS in my absence. Jennifer has been with DDESS since 1995 (28 years) and has approximately 20 years of FEA-SR experience as a local president, FRS, vice president, and secretary at Quantico. I appreciate her leadership, knowledge of the MLA and union rights, and willingness to step in to support FEA-SR. During my absence, presidents and members should contact Jennifer at [Quanticoeducationassn@gmail.com](mailto:Quanticoeducationassn@gmail.com). Thank you Jennifer!



**FEA-SR is Fighting and Advocating for Members** — I have been extremely busy from my travels between DoDEA schools, the frequent emails I send to presidents (multiple emails per day or week) for them to share with members, not to mention all the information crammed into my newsletters. We are organizing meetings, teams, committees, trainings, gearing up for bargaining two new MLAs at the same time, and more. Many of these things (including simultaneous MLA bargaining) are new and unprecedented in the history of FEA-SR. When I am not on the road, I spend my days writing and answering emails to and from presidents, attorneys, members, and DoDEA officials; making and taking phone calls and texts; and of course, attending more meetings. I have nearly 200 emails in my inbox right now and I am working as fast as possible seven days a week. If you need me to follow-up on something, please do not hesitate to send me a reminder!

If you notice possible violations of the MLA, changes in working conditions, unfair practices, or other concerning issues in your school, tell your FRS and local president (who will let me know and the assigned attorney know so we can track MLA violations, unfair labor practices, health and safety issues, and other problems/

concerns). The Union/Association is here to help but we cannot address what we don't know about and don't have specifics for. Please help by staying in touch with your FRS and local president. Please continue to read my newsletters and emails sent, and please read my emails/information that I send to presidents for dissemination to members. Read and know your MLA, help us enforce the MLA and our rights/protections, and stay engaged within your local union. We are stronger together! If you ever want to contact me directly because you want me to be aware of systemic problems across DoDEA or for other reasons, please email me at [ADanahy@nea.org](mailto:ADanahy@nea.org). You can also use [this anonymous Google Form](#) (no login required) to send me questions, concerns, and information. If you want a response, however, you would need to include your email address. Please remember, though, to begin by addressing questions and concerns with your FRS who is the voice of the Union at the school building level.

I have truly enjoyed meeting hundreds of FEA-SR members while visiting 10 military installations over the past two months (Fort Campbell, Fort Liberty, Camp Lejeune, Fort Stewart, Laurel Bay, Fort Jackson, Fort Novosel, Maxwell, Fort Knox, and Quantico). I am scheduled to visit West Point on November 8-9 and look forward to future visits to Fort Moore, Guam, and returning to Fort Campbell for a full visit (dates TBD). In closing, enjoy the remainder of October, and keep up the outstanding work that you do every single day for our precious military-connected students and staff. It is an honor to work alongside you and to advocate for a better DoDEA. Watch your personal/non-DoDEA email for more to come!

Fighting for a Strong Union,  
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✉ This email was sent to FEA-SR members on October 22, 2023. Please remember to [visit the Member Login page on the FEA-SR Website](#) to access all recently sent emails, information updates, and other resources for members.

## FEA-SR Member Login

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