



DOMESTIC DEPENDENT ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

News Release

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Memorandum Grants Stateside Educators DoDEA Certification

PEACHTREE CITY, Ga. – Dr. Elaine Beraza, Director, Department of Defense (DoD) Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) and Caroline Myers, Area Director of the Federal Education Association-Stateside Region (FEA-SR), today announced that DDESS and FEA-SR have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows stateside educators to hold Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) certification.

The MOU will be phased in by district, except for life certificate holders and those whose certification is expiring and who voluntarily apply. DDESS' South Carolina/Fort Stewart District will be the first district to implement the MOU.

In an effort to lessen the consequences for DDESS educators from the adverse effects of changing state certification requirements, the decision was made to include DDESS in the DoDEA certification program. The MOU includes the following provisions:

1. The transition to DoDEA certification for all districts will occur in three to six years. After receiving feedback from the South Carolina/Fort Stewart District, FEA-SR will bargain with DDESS on full implementation, making adjustments where needed and setting dates for implementation in the other DDESS districts.
2. DDESS educators will not be required to maintain state certification; however, they may do so if they choose. DDESS administrators will continue to provide some assistance with state certification, such as verification of employment or signing documents.
3. If educators' state certificates are expiring in districts not yet designated for the transition to DoDEA certification, those educators may voluntarily apply for a DoDEA license, rather than renewing their state certificates.
4. Life certificate holders will be the last group of educators to transition to DoDEA certification. This will not only allow them to continue serving children with their life certificates during the transition period but also provide them six years of DoDEA certification from the end of the transition window.
5. DoDEA certification is for a six-year period, regardless of the expiration date of the current state certificate. South Carolina/Fort Stewart District educators will submit documentation no later than January 1, 2005.

6. Six (6) graduate or undergraduate college credits will be needed for renewal at the end of the six-year period. DoDEA, DDESS and the districts will make reasonable efforts to provide opportunities for credit from regionally accredited colleges or universities for their staff development initiatives, when appropriate. All course credit will be at the employee's expense.
7. The implementation of this licensure program will in no way change the DDESS Master Labor Agreement, including, but not limited to, the length of the probationary period, the performance appraisal instrument and cycle, the due process requirements, and the procedures for academic salary lane changes.

According to Myers, there is no cost involved and the process is simple. The educator will fax or mail a copy of his or her current state certificate to DoDEA. The new certificate will be processed and mailed to both the district and the individual educator. Detailed instructions will be prepared in the very near future.

“I am very pleased that DoDEA, DDESS and FEA-SR have committed together and have agreed to make this opportunity available for our educators.” Myers said. “As states are changing their certification requirements, we must be proactive in order to protect our bargaining unit members so that employment as a DDESS educator is not in jeopardy. This ensures that.”

Beraza echoed Myers' sentiments, saying she is very pleased with the agreement. “Common licensure for our educators will allow our teachers and administrators to have greater mobility between our districts,” she said. “Ultimately, they will all have DoDEA certification and can choose individually if they want to pursue state certification.”