



1201 16th St, N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle  
President

Princess R. Moss  
Vice President

Noel Candelaria  
Secretary-Treasurer

Kim A. Anderson  
Executive Director

July 14, 2025

Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, including educators who support and teach students at Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools, we submit these comments in conjunction with the committee's markup of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

NEA educators at DoDEA schools are represented by the Federal Education Association (FEA). NEA members—wherever they live and work—are passionate about ensuring that our nation's students have access to an education that inspires their desire to learn. For DoDEA educators, this mission takes on special significance and urgency given the unique challenges their students face. Considering these challenges, we urge you to vote in favor of any amendments to the NDAA that would increase support for DoDEA special education services, programs, and staff members, as well as amendments that increase access to comprehensive, school-based mental health services for DoDEA students.

This support would be consistent with recommendations from an [April 2025 Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report](#) which found that special education and related services in DoDEA schools “were often limited or unavailable, resulting in service delays or disruptions.” The study found delays in services for students in 44 of DoDEA's 114 overseas schools in 2022-23.

Furthermore, a [May 2025 GAO report](#) found that DoDEA schools “assessed one in 50 students for suicide risk in each of school years 2022-23 and 2023-24 in response to an identified mental health concern.” DoDEA school psychologists and school counselors said they struggled to support students' needs for help dealing with anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental health issues.

These reports come during a time of terminations of DoDEA staff, including special education assessors—professionals who perform cognitive and academic learning evaluations to determine whether a student has any special education needs—speech-language pathologists, education technologists, and others who are crucial to student success. Several educators shared perspectives on the impact of those terminations:

- *“I don't teach, I don't counsel, I don't provide therapy. I manage a million other aspects of the special education referral process through eligibility, so when first-time parents get the news about their child's disability and the impact on general education (and much more), I can confidently answer any of their questions about assessment results without waiver. To do this job, it takes a lot more than testing and writing a report—it's understanding the assessments we have access to and utilizing the most appropriate for THAT particular child.”—Special education assessor*
- *“[Of] all of the positions we are losing, I am most disappointed with the loss of the attendance clerk, our main secretary in the front office. At our school of 900+ our secretary is on demand 24/7. I am fearful that without a designated person to oversee all of these essential components, most importantly,*

*attendance tracking, that many of our truant students will fall even further through the cracks.”—  
Education technologist*

- *“Our Education technologist, in particular, runs the Student Council, is the Student Activity Fund bookkeeper, attends almost every admin meeting to provide tech support, and acts as a resource when teachers, students, and parents need help using ASPEN, the gradebook/attendance portal. Knowing how essential an ET position is to each school, this is NOT the position to remove.”—Education technologist and special education assessor*

We also urge you to vote in favor of Rep. Chrissy Houlahan’s (D-PA) amendment to prevent further terminations of employees of DoDEA and military child development centers. In addition, please support amendments to restore FEA members’ collective bargaining rights. Through collective bargaining, FEA members have advocated for conditions that enhance students’ experience, including increased learning time and stronger connections between military-connected families and educators. These rights were stripped from them by executive order earlier this year. In April, 44 members of Congress penned a [bipartisan letter](#) to the Department of Defense urging an exemption from this executive order for DoDEA. They argued that the agency “does not have a primary function related to intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or natural security,” and as such, federal collective bargaining protections can be applied to DoDEA in a manner consistent with national security requirements and considerations.

Military-connected students often endure multiple deployments and relocations, and educators do their best to support them through every challenge. Because of these unique circumstances—and the many sacrifices that America’s military families make on our behalf—we appreciate your consideration and ask that you provide DoDEA students and educators with the support they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kimberly Johnson Trinca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Kimberly Johnson Trinca  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association