



# NO VOICE, NO CHOICE:

How Federal Agency Administrators  
Sideline Parents at the  
Pentagon K-12 Schools



**OPEN THE  
BOOKS™**  
Every Dime. Online. In Real Time.



# **NO VOICE, NO CHOICE:**

## **How Federal Agency Administrators Sideline Parents at the Pentagon K-12 Schools**

---

**FEBRUARY 2026**

**OUR REPORT MADE POSSIBLE BY:**

The "Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006"

**SPONSORS:** Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) & Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL)  
(Public Law 109-282, 109th Congress)



**“ Open the Books is doing the work I envisioned when the Coburn-Obama bill became law. Their innovative app and other tools are putting sunlight through a magnifying glass. ”**

**US Senator Tom Coburn, MD**  
Washington, D.C. | March 11, 2014



**“ I know that restoring transparency is not only the surest way to achieve results, but also to earn back the trust in government... ”**

**US Senator Barack Obama**  
Washington, D.C. | January 28, 2009



# CONTENTS

## **06 PROLOGUE**

## **07 METHODOLOGY**

## **08 TOP TEN TAKEAWAYS**

## **10 PRIMER: The DoDEA Parent Pathway to Policy Change**

## **13 DoDEA TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: From Bad to Worse**

### **13 Setting the Stage: A 1988 Hearing**

14 1990: The GAO Investigation

### **15 2014-2024: DoDEA Leadership Compounds Problems for Parents**

15 2016: DoD IG Mission for Dependents Schools is Given to Newly Created DoDEA IG Office

17 2016: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education is Written out of Code

18 2018: Development of the 5-year Strategic Plan

21 2021: Changes made to the Dependents Education Council

23 2020-24: Foundational Governance Document DoDI 1342.15 Replaced by DoDEA AI 1358.01

29 2024: DoDI Replaced with DoDEA AI by Director Schiavino-Narvaez

31 2023: Partial Results Released from Stakeholder Feedback Survey Conducted by DoDEA HQ

### **33 WHY ACCOUNTABILITY IS CRUCIAL: DoDEA Administrators Conspire to Deceive Parents, Congress, and the Public**

33 Equity and Access Summit and DEI Cover-up

# CONTENTS (continued)

- 36 Social Emotional Learning in Practice and DoDEA's Cover-up
- 38 The Secret Meeting
- 40 CONCLUSION: Voice of DoDEA Administration has Grown at the Expense of Parents**
- 42 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**
- 42 FURTHER READING**
- 43 ACRONYM KEY**
- 44 APPENDIX**
  - 44 Appendix A:**
    - 44 Example 1: Teacher Shortages
    - 45 Example 2: Testing and Career Readiness Scores
    - 46 Problems with NAEP at DoDEA
    - 47 Example 3: Special Education
  - 48 Appendix B:**
    - 48 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey Comments
    - 53 Additional, More Recent, Parent and Teacher Comments (2024/2025)
- 61 ABOUT AMERICAN TRANSPARENCY**
  - 63 In Recognition of Our Team**
  - 64 Previous Oversight**
  - 65 It's Your Money!**

## PROLOGUE

The **Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)** is a sub-agency of the **Department of War (DOW)**, charged with educating the pre-kindergarten-12 children of military servicemembers around the world. There are 161 DoDEA schools in 11 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico, according to the U.S. Army website.<sup>1</sup> About 67,000 students are enrolled in these schools, and DoDEA's fiscal year 2024 budget<sup>2</sup> was about \$2.3 billion.

DoDEA is one of two federal school systems (the other is run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs). With the power and resources of the federal government behind it, and the strategic importance of military recruitment to the national interest, Americans should feel confident the DoDEA schools are of the highest standard. Unfortunately, recent investigations into DoDEA have cast serious doubts over the school system's integrity and rigor—with teachers openly admitting to hiding “gender transitions” from parents and forcing “uncomfortable conversations” on race, sexuality, and “privilege” onto both children and staff.

While the school system's ideologically-charged classroom practices captured headlines, reforms led by long-time DoDEA bureaucrats slowly and subtly worked to exclude parents from school governance and expand the influence of the administrators themselves. Left unchecked by Congressional oversight, administrators were emboldened to silence parent criticism, and weaponized **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** request rules to evade accountability from outside researchers.

The recent dust-up over the school system's **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)** office demonstrates how DoDEA administrators brazenly push forward their own favored policies, ignoring Congress and the parents they are supposed to be serving. For example, in 2023 then-director Tom Brady announced to Congress he would dismantle DoDEA's divisive DEI department. At the same time, he informed<sup>3</sup> staff in an internal email that DEI would just be embedded more deeply into various agency departments.

When controversial **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** methods implemented at the school also came under scrutiny, DoDEA officials convened a secret meeting, caught on tape,<sup>4</sup> conspiring to change any mention of SEL to “resilience.” They stated while the term would be revised to evade more criticism (specifically from Open the Books), they would be keeping SEL in the classrooms completely unchanged.

---

1 [myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/DoD-Education-Activities-\(DoDEA\)?serv=127](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/DoD-Education-Activities-(DoDEA)?serv=127)

2 [comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2025/budget\\_justification/pdfs/01\\_Operation\\_and\\_Maintenance/O\\_M\\_VOL\\_1\\_PART\\_1/DoDDE\\_OP-5.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2025/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PART_1/DoDDE_OP-5.pdf)

3 [www.openthebooks.com/as#sets/1/6/Pentagons\\_Secret\\_Push\\_to\\_Institutionalize\\_DEI\\_in\\_its\\_K-12\\_Public\\_Schools2.pdf](https://www.openthebooks.com/as#sets/1/6/Pentagons_Secret_Push_to_Institutionalize_DEI_in_its_K-12_Public_Schools2.pdf)

4 [x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184](https://x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184)

In 2024 Congress stepped in and encoded a “Parents Bill of Rights” so DoDEA parents can, among other things, review the instructional materials used by students and be notified of medical information collected on their child. But Congress failed to address fundamental issues stripping parents of their ability to engage in their children’s schools’ governance.

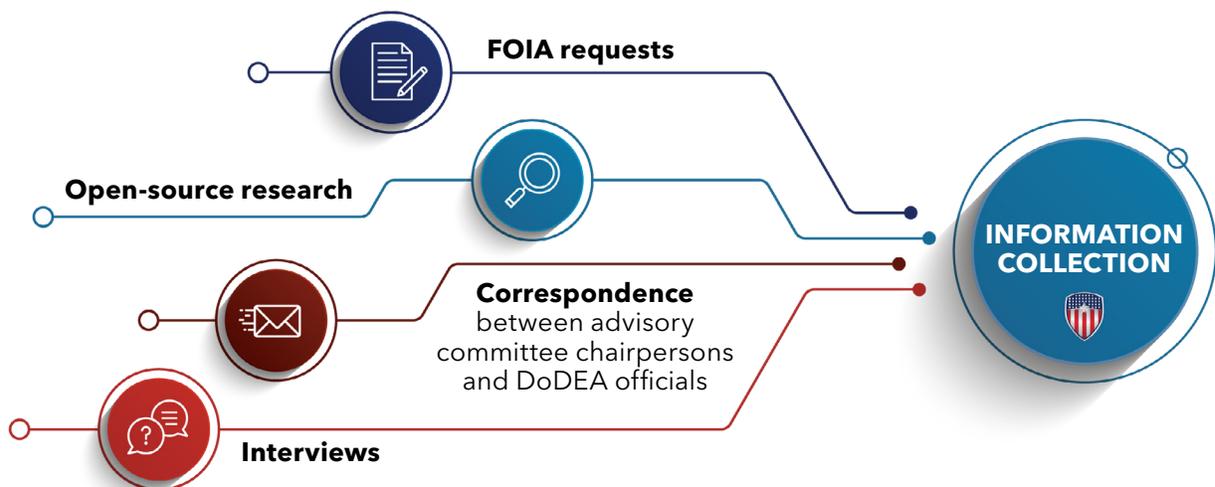
In most other schools in the United States, parents can access a school board of elected officials who must hear out their concerns. As will be discussed throughout this report, DoDEA’s equivalent governing infrastructure has been dismantled over the years, leaving few meaningful mechanisms left for parental input. If parents are unhappy, they must find alternative options. And unlike their State Department colleagues, they must pay for them out of pocket.

**This report is an in-depth look at the policy failures surrounding DoDEA governance, particularly pertaining to parent involvement and administrative accountability.**

The regulations can seem byzantine to newcomers to this topic, but this report aims for a complete understanding of the current governance situation so parents, regulators, and the press can advocate precisely for necessary reforms.

## METHODOLOGY

Information was collected via FOIA requests, open-source research, correspondence between advisory committee chairpersons and DoDEA officials, and interviews. All citations are provided. Journalists, organizations, oversight committees, politicians and watchdogs are encouraged to review the facts delineated in our report and continue to investigate.



## TOP TEN TAKEAWAYS

- 01** There are five levels of committees or councils that can provide recommendations and advice to DoDEA leaders, ranging from school-specific (School Advisory Committee) to agency-wide (Dependents Education Council). Historically, parents could only be elected into the lowest two committees, and then could be selected into the next two highest levels. There are no parents on the Dependents Education Council (DEC).
- 02** In a congressional hearing in 1988, parents testified about the ineffectiveness of the school advisory board system and recommended that elected parents sit on every level of advisory board, including DEC at DoDEA headquarters (HQ).
- 03** Recent changes to DoDEA governance drastically changed the form and function of the advisory committee system, diluting parent presence and influence within the organization. Changes were made suddenly and without explanation.
- 04** The names of DEC attendees are no longer published—as used to be standard practice.
- 05** The Advisory Council on Dependents Education (ACDE), which included appointed parents and provided recommendations and advice to the director of DoDEA, was written out of law in 2016, closing another path to parent influence in the school system.

06 In 2016 DoDEA created its own Inspector General (IG) office, so the agency now investigates itself.

07 Parents are not an integral part of the development of the 5-year strategic planning process for the system—known as the Blueprint. DoDEA has not publicly revealed who it has commissioned to create the most recent blueprint or who sits on the steering committee. A FOIA request for the information was returned completely redacted.

08 After DoDEA leadership ignored congressional calls for accountability regarding DEI measures, then-chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's (HASC) Subcommittee on Military Personnel called for a complete change of leadership. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, who sat on the DEI Steering Committee, and other top leaders remain at the agency. Schiavino-Narvaez was promoted to DoDEA director in 2024.

09 Administrators were caught in a recording deceptively replacing mention of SEL with “resilience” in agency documents and altered already-published material in order to avoid drawing negative attention to SEL practices.

10 Stakeholder Feedback Surveys are the last place parents can give direct feedback to DoDEA leadership, but qualitative results from the surveys are difficult to obtain, and it is unclear if or how DoDEA leadership responds to these surveys. DoDEA removed the option for parents to write in feedback in the school year (SY) 23/24 survey. Such qualitative data obtained from 2023 via FOIA contained complaints of student-on-student sexual activity on campus, difficulties with “21st Century school” classrooms, and DEI and SEL policies.

## PRIMER: The DoDEA Parent Pathway to Policy Change

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

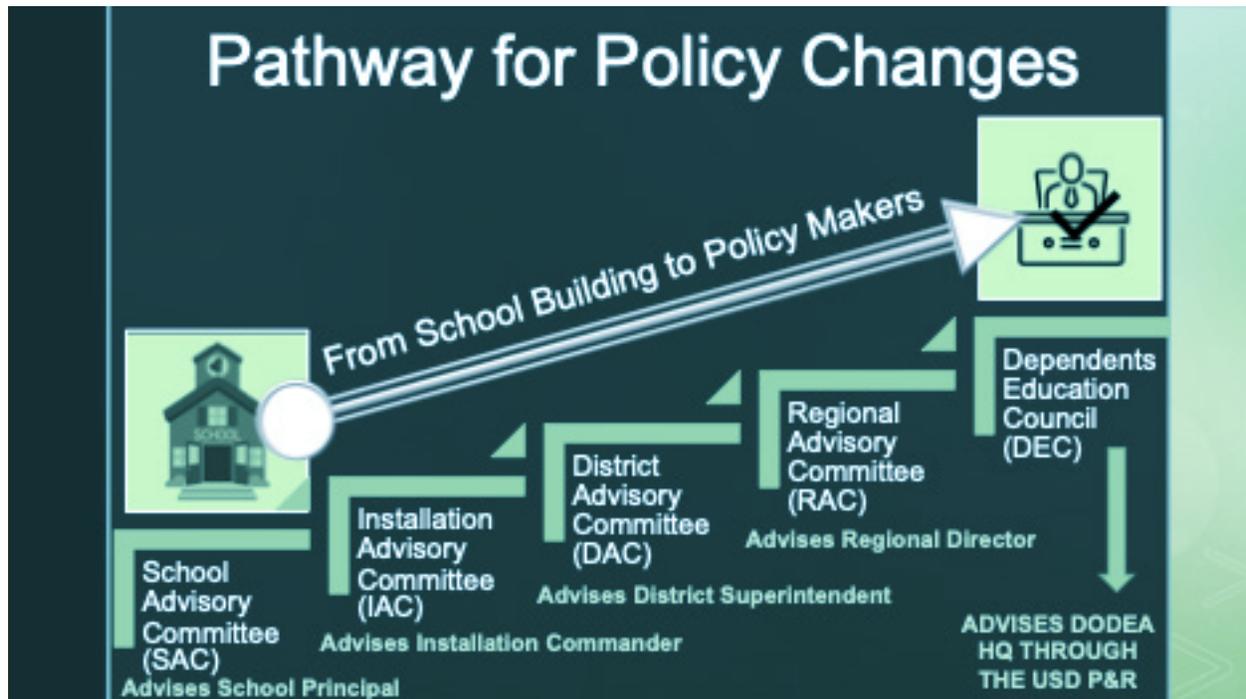
There are five levels of committees or councils that can provide recommendations and advice to DoDEA leaders, ranging from school-specific (School Advisory Committee–SAC) to agency-wide (Dependents Education Council–DEC). Parents can only be elected into the lowest two committees, and then may be selected into the next two highest levels. There are no parents on the DEC. As of SY 24/25, schools in the continental United States transitioned from advisory school boards to SACs due to a provision in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act that brings them into alignment with overseas schools.

**Policy changes in 2020 and 2024, to be discussed throughout this report, reduced the scope and depth of parent input along this pathway.**

**Families moving into the system are often unaware that the school boards they're used to in U.S. public schools are nothing like those found in DoDEA, which are only advisory.**



The below graphic gives a visual of the complicated advisory board system provided as the pathway for issue resolution and policy changes that begins at the school level with the SAC and continues on up the chain of command to the Installation Advisory Committee (IAC), the District Advisory Committee (DAC), the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), and culminates with the DEC at HQ in Alexandria, Virginia.



Pathway for policy changes courtesy of Kim Day<sup>5</sup>

As the first step in the chain, the SAC is supposed to be composed of an equal number of parents and full-time employees, who are, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, “authorized to provide advice and make recommendations on almost any school-related issue, specifically recommendations on curricula and budgets and on installation-provided support, such as transportation, maintenance, and school meals.”<sup>6</sup>

The report also explained that bases with more than one school have an IAC. The IAC includes two members (one parent and one school employee) elected by secret ballot from each of the SACs. A high school student may also serve on the IAC when deemed appropriate. School principals and the base commander attend all IAC

<sup>5</sup> Day, Kim. “Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Overseas Schools: Improving Education for Military Families,” PowerPoint, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, DoD Overseas Schools: Additional Assurances of Educational Quality Needed, GAO/HRD-90-13 (Washington, D.C., 1990), 1. [gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13](http://gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13)

meetings as non-voting members. If there is only one school on base, the elected SAC members are automatically IAC members. If a SAC or IAC is unable to resolve an “issue with the principal or commander, it can put its concerns in writing and refer them to successively higher levels—to the DAC, the RAC, and the DEC—until a resolution is reached.”<sup>7</sup>

District Superintendents determine the composition of DACs, which include military personnel, parents chosen—not elected—from each SAC, School Liaison Officers, a Community Superintendent, principals, a member of a union who is also an employee, any organization or agency related to agenda items, and an Instructional Systems Specialist.

The DoDEA Director of Student Excellence (DSE), an additional title for the Director of the Pacific, Europe or the Americas, determines the need for and composition of the RAC. The recommended voting members are similar to those recommended for the DAC—and parents are chosen by the DSE from the SACs.

The DEC was established to make recommendations to the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (USW P&R) for the administration and operation of DoDEA. It is chaired by the USW P&R (or designee), and its members include general or flag officers from theater and major commands and various departments, and the executive secretary is the DoDEA Director.

**Parental involvement has always been an issue with DoDEA, but over the past ten years policy changes have reduced opportunities for parents to have a voice in their children’s schools still further. Most recently, a key advisory board governance policy was quietly changed in September 2024, drastically altering the parent pathway to policy change.**

**Not only have parents been sidelined, but it appears that most of the authority that military commanders had over the advisory board process has shifted to DoDEA administrators as well.<sup>8</sup> When parents have asked for clarity, none has been given, which will be covered later in this report.**

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Name Withheld and SAC chair, “DoDI 1342.15 vs DoDEA AI 1358.01,” June 2025. PDF

## DoDEA TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: From Bad to Worse

Military dependents schools have long struggled as a school system to meet the unique needs of military families. A congressional hearing<sup>9</sup> from 38 years ago—that reads like it could have been written yesterday—showed that the school system was unresponsive to parents and that it suffered from a lack of transparency and accountability.<sup>10</sup>

Under the direction of Tom Brady, from 2014-2024, the agency took a series of actions that compounded its decades-long problems with accountability and transparency. And today, under one of Tom Brady's executive officers, Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, the agency still actively hides controversial activities from parents and Congress and is not on a trajectory for much-needed reforms without intervention from DOW leadership.

### Setting the Stage: A 1988 Hearing

Schools for military dependents have existed<sup>11</sup> since the 1820s, when Congress first enacted a law to allow schools on military bases, although these became more formalized<sup>12</sup> after World War II. Schools were run by various branches of the military until 1978, when operations were consolidated under the Department of Defense (now Department of War). Ten years after this consolidation, a congressional hearing revealed systemic issues in how the new school system, then called Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS), was being managed.

On October 5, 1988, in a hearing<sup>13</sup> on DoDDS before the HASC Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, parents, a student, and a representative from the National Military Family Association (NMFA) reported that the SACs were not effective in elevating school-level concerns to HQ in the United States.

**Among these school-level concerns were: discipline/safety issues on school buses; inadequate services for special education students; over-reliance on long-term substitute teachers; the inability to fire poor-performing teachers and administrators (and the subsequent shuffling around of these individuals); and the system taking credit for standardized test scores for students new to the schools.**

---

9 [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5)

10 U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, "DoD Dependents Schools: Hearing before the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services," House of Representatives, 100th Congress, second session, 1988, page 11. [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5)

11 [ednc.org/federal-schools-on-military-bases-in-north-carolina/](https://ednc.org/federal-schools-on-military-bases-in-north-carolina/)

12 [dodea.edu/about/about-dodea/dodeas-75-year-history](https://dodea.edu/about/about-dodea/dodeas-75-year-history)

13 [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=1](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=1)

Suzanne Rucker, a parent testifying at the hearing, summed up the issues at the school system:

Over the years much has been said about the need to improve parent-school communication in DODDS. Poor communication is a symptom of a greater problem – lack of accountability built into the DODDS structure. Poor communication exists because DODDS personnel know they’re not accountable to anyone outside their system.<sup>14</sup>

**Hearing witnesses were emphatic: parents needed an elected seat at every advisory committee level, including at the DEC at HQ.<sup>15</sup>**

### **1990: The GAO Investigation**

A GAO investigation instigated by the hearing resulted in a 1990 report, which found that advisory committees tended to focus on “school operations issues such as lunch programs and pedestrian safety, rather than on reviewing and making recommendations on school curricula and budgets.”<sup>16</sup>

The GAO recommended that “the Secretary of Defense require the Office of Dependents Schools to ensure that advisory committees are provided the opportunity to review school policy issues and to advise school principals on them, specifically curricula and budget issues.”<sup>17</sup>

They also recommended that committees be required to document “that they have been given that opportunity and are aware that they can elevate unresolved concerns to the school system management above the principal level.”<sup>18</sup>

While parents and the GAO recommended that parents be involved in substantive policy issues at DoDEA schools, recent years have seen parent voices sidelined by DoDEA administrators.

---

14 U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, “DoD Dependents Schools: Hearing before the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services,” House of Representatives, 100th Congress, second session, 1988. [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5), 27.

15 Ibid, 8-9.

16 U.S. Government Accountability Office, “DoD Overseas Schools: Additional Assurances of Educational Quality Needed,” GAO/HRD-90-13, 1990, page 21. [gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13](http://gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13)

17 Ibid, 23.

18 Ibid, 23-24.

## 2014-2024: DoDEA Leadership Compounds Problems for Parents

Twenty-six years passed between the 1988 hearing and the beginning term of DoDEA's longest serving and recently-retired director, Tom Brady. Because of the length of his service and the substantial reforms Brady undertook, this report will pick up at his appointment, to the present day.

Brady was appointed DoDEA Director in 2014 under the Obama Administration, and he retired in Spring 2024. Brady's ten-year tenure oversaw a series of actions that reduced parental influence and insulated the administration from criticism as the agency undertook radical changes. Dr. Schiavino-Narvaez, who joined DoDEA in 2016 and served as Brady's Chief Academic Officer since 2020, succeeded him in time for SY 24/25.

### 2016: DoD IG Mission for Dependents Schools is Given to Newly Created DoDEA IG Office

#### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

DoDEA has its own IG office, established in 2016. This raises concerns about accountability and conflict of interest.

#### SOLUTION:

The DoDEA investigations via the IG office should instead run through the DOW, as was the case before 2016.

In 2016 Brady launched the Restructuring for Student Achievement project, a four-year effort to align all military dependents schools worldwide into one system. In doing so he created a new office that would conduct audits and investigations. Instead of using DoD's IG, DoDEA now had its own IG office.<sup>19</sup>

---

19 Community Strategic Plan Closeout: School Years 2013/14 through 2017/18, Department of Defense Education Activity, page 14. [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED605259.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED605259.pdf)

Now, if parents have a problem that they feel cannot be resolved through the advisory committee system, they can file an IG complaint—but DoDEA will be investigating itself.



**A *Stars and Stripes* article from June 2019, When DoDEA Investigates its Teachers for Bullying, Parents Say They’re Left in the Dark,<sup>20</sup> explains why this arrangement is so concerning:**

The stories told to *Stars and Stripes* by DODEA parents and former employees portray a school system mired in inertia and lacking in transparency and accountability. While abusive teachers exist in other systems, public and private, those schools answer to school boards or state departments of education.

But complaints or concerns about DODEA schools are addressed by DODEA itself, leading parents to believe they have few rights and less recourse when dealing with apparent teacher misconduct. Not even base commanders have authority over DODEA on many matters, though they may have some input.

‘It’s like the fox watching the hen house,’ said Elizabeth Wright, the mother of a special needs fourth-grader.<sup>21</sup>

20 [web.archive.org/web/20190624141859/https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/when-dodea-investigates-its-teachers-for-bullying-parents-say-they-re-left-in-the-dark-1.587229](https://www.web.archive.org/web/20190624141859/https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/when-dodea-investigates-its-teachers-for-bullying-parents-say-they-re-left-in-the-dark-1.587229)

21 Svan, Jennifer. “When DoDEA Investigates its Teachers for Bullying, Parents Say They’re Left in the Dark,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 23, 2019. [stripes.com/news/2019-06-22/dodea-abuse-investigation-18980219.html](https://www.stripes.com/news/2019-06-22/dodea-abuse-investigation-18980219.html)

## 2016: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education is Written out of Code

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

An important venue for parents to voice concerns at the director level of DoDEA, called the **Advisory Council on Dependents' Education (ACDE)**, was written out of code, seemingly without parental input and without a mention in the 2016 and 2017 DEC minutes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Consider reestablishing the ACDE or something like it and investigate the circumstances of its disappearance to bolster its future success.

### Another avenue for parents to bring their concerns to HQ and the USW P&R was the ACDE.<sup>22</sup>

The ACDE was established by law in 1978 and was mentioned by an NMFA representative in the 1988 hearing as “the only avenue the parents have to reach the Director...”<sup>23</sup> The council met at least three times each year and was “an advisory body mandated by Congress to address general education policies and theory.”<sup>24</sup>

**The ACDE seems to have been a very active body—and the law mandated that parents, among others, were to be appointed members.** This mandate appears to have been followed inconsistently; an attendee list<sup>25</sup> for a meeting in 2008 doesn't appear to list any parents; an attendee list for a meeting in 2001 shows two parents.<sup>26,27</sup> It was co-chaired by the Secretary of War (or designee) and the Secretary of Education (or designee). The DoDEA Director was the executive director for the council.

Members of the council made visits to schools around the world. Topics discussed include: education of children with disabilities, increasing parental involvement, security and discipline on school buses, and the draft strategic plan (known today as the Blueprint for Continuous Improvement)—many of the topics mentioned in the 1988 hearing, which are still top concerns of parents today.<sup>28</sup>

22 U.S. Code, 20 USC 929: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education. [uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2007-title20-section929&num=0&edition=2007](https://www.uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-2007-title20-section929&num=0&edition=2007)

23 U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *DoD Dependents Schools: Hearing before the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, 100th Congress, second session, 1988*, 8. [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5)

24 *Ibid*, 9.

25 [facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h2f1AAA](https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h2f1AAA)

26 2008 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education. <https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h2f1AAA> [facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h2f1AAA](https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h2f1AAA)

27 2001 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education. [facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h4GFAAY](https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h4GFAAY)

28 Meeting of the Advisory Council on Dependents' Education, *Federal Register* 60, no. 51 (16 March 1995): 14272. [govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1995-03-16/pdf/95-6424.pdf](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1995-03-16/pdf/95-6424.pdf)

The *2017 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education* shows that in FY2014 and FY2015, the ACDE lacked a quorum of members, so it did not meet.<sup>29</sup>

### **Why were members not appointed to this important group?**

In the report, DoDEA stated that parents and others on the council were not needed because the Department of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers were providing sufficient guidance and support to DoDEA.

Michael Godfrey, DoDEA's current Chief of Operations, Plans, Legislation and Policy, and then-point person for the ACDE (as was Kathleen M. Facon, the Designated Federal Officer), echoed the rationale given in the *2017 Current Fiscal Year Report* in an email with a parent, and added that costs of operating the council had more than doubled since 1994.<sup>30</sup>

**Therefore, the ACDE was written out of code by Congress, and the supposed education "experts" now had more of a voice than the parents.**

## **2018: Development of the 5-year Strategic Plan**

### **ISSUE IN BRIEF:**

Parents are not invited to meaningfully contribute to the DoDEA strategic plans via the Blueprint Steering Committees, although teachers' union representatives are.

### **SOLUTION:**

Parents, such as those who serve on SACs, should be elected to participate on DoDEA Blueprint Steering Committees.

In 2018 Brady launched the development of a 5-year strategic plan for DoDEA, the Blueprint for Continuous Improvement.<sup>31</sup> While this document would shape DoDEA dramatically, Brady did not include parents on the steering committee because, according to page 7 of Volume 1 of the blueprint, he didn't want to "burden" employees and stakeholders.<sup>32</sup>

Members of the Blueprint Steering Committee instead included, among others, representatives from the Federal Education Association (FEA) (an affiliate of the

29 2017 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Council on Dependents' Education. [facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h06dAAA](https://facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACACommitteeLevelReportAsPDF?id=a10t0000001h06dAAA)

30 Day, Kim, emails to Ms. Lois Rapp, Dr. Jeff Arrington, and Mr. Michael Godfrey about the Dependents Education Council and the Advisory Council on Dependents' Education, December 2021, January 2022, February 2022. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_Correspondence\\_between\\_Kim\\_Day\\_Rapp\\_Arrington\\_Godfrey\\_on\\_ACDE\\_and\\_DEC\\_December\\_2021.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_Correspondence_between_Kim_Day_Rapp_Arrington_Godfrey_on_ACDE_and_DEC_December_2021.pdf)

31 [dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement](https://dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement)

32 *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement*, Volumes 1-5, Department of Defense Education Activity, 2018-2024. [dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources](https://dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources)

National Education Association) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and Stephen Hovanic<sup>33</sup>—a former DoDEA Chief of Staff who would later be arrested in a sex trafficking sting in 2023.<sup>34 35</sup>



Members of the DoDEA Blueprint for Continuous Improvement Steering Committee

33 [dailycaller.com/2023/11/21/top-pentagon-school-administrator-arrested-human-trafficking-sting/?ref](https://www.dailycaller.com/2023/11/21/top-pentagon-school-administrator-arrested-human-trafficking-sting/?ref)

34 *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, Volumes 1-5, Department of Defense Education Activity, 2018-2024.* [dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources](https://dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources), back cover.

35 Burrow, Micaela. "Pentagon Official at Office Overseeing Elementary Schools Arrested in Human Trafficking Sting," *Daily Caller*, November 21, 2023. [dailycaller.com/2023/11/21/top-pentagon-school-administrator-arrested-human-trafficking-sting/?ref](https://www.dailycaller.com/2023/11/21/top-pentagon-school-administrator-arrested-human-trafficking-sting/?ref)

**In June 2023,<sup>36</sup> an attendee at the DEC asked Director Brady:**

How can we create an environment of increased collaboration with stakeholders? Have you (DoDEA) considered the inclusion of select military leaders, parents, and teachers in the development of the next five-year strategic plan? Many stakeholders do not feel they have a voice.<sup>37</sup>

**Brady's response was evasive, and one familiar to those who have suggested similar changes to leadership.**

I believe DoDEA is remarkably responsive to parents, commanders, and stakeholders and we celebrate our partnerships with community leaders. However, the DEC is for senior leaders around the world and I'm not sure this forum is appropriate for what you suggested. Remember, the DEC is not an entry point but is a culmination of issues that flow up from local school advisory committees and regional advisory boards. Any issues not resolved at the local level but may pertain to the general membership are forwarded to the DEC. However, let's set up a visit where we can get together and discuss some of your thoughts.<sup>38</sup>

**The issue, discussed in the next section, is that concerns are often not resolved at the local level, but also not forwarded to the DEC. When, then, can parents have a say on important policy matters?**

**In the fall of 2024, the new director, Schiavino-Narvaez, did allow parents to weigh in on the next forthcoming 5-year strategic plan by answering a short survey asking what skills DoDEA students would need to become "Future-Ready."<sup>39</sup>**

**Military spouse Amy Haywood requested greater details about the forthcoming plan in March, such as the name of the person or company commissioned to create the blueprint and the names of those who sat on the steering committee.**

**The FOIA results were produced in June 2025, but were completely redacted.**

36 [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0)

37 "Summary," June 2023, Dependents Education Council, page 23. [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category\[997425\]=997425&page=0](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category[997425]=997425&page=0)

38 Ibid.

39 "Future-Ready" Students Survey, November 2024. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_Future-Ready\\_Students\\_Input\\_DoDEA\\_November\\_4-22\\_2024.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_Future-Ready_Students_Input_DoDEA_November_4-22_2024.pdf)

## 2021: Changes made to the Dependents Education Council

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

The DoDEA Director and broader leadership control the information presented at the DEC entirely—an obvious conflict of interest and a disservice to military families (and teachers who also do not have a dedicated voice in the advisory board process if they are at odds with the unions that serve as the voice of teachers).

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

A standardized and easily accessible tracking tool must be developed for issues raised in advisory committees. The echelon above the DoDEA Director, the USW P&R and the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASW M&RA), and the SASC and HASC personnel subcommittees with oversight of DoDEA, should have access to such a tracking tool, to know how to hold leaders accountable.

Surveys about the education experience of all families on bases should be developed and conducted by military installations (not by DoDEA) with results delivered to the USW P&R, the ASW M&RA, and the pertinent congressional subcommittees—for complete transparency and so topics can be addressed at the DEC. This would also capture the reasons why families have pulled their children out of DoDEA schools and have sought other options.

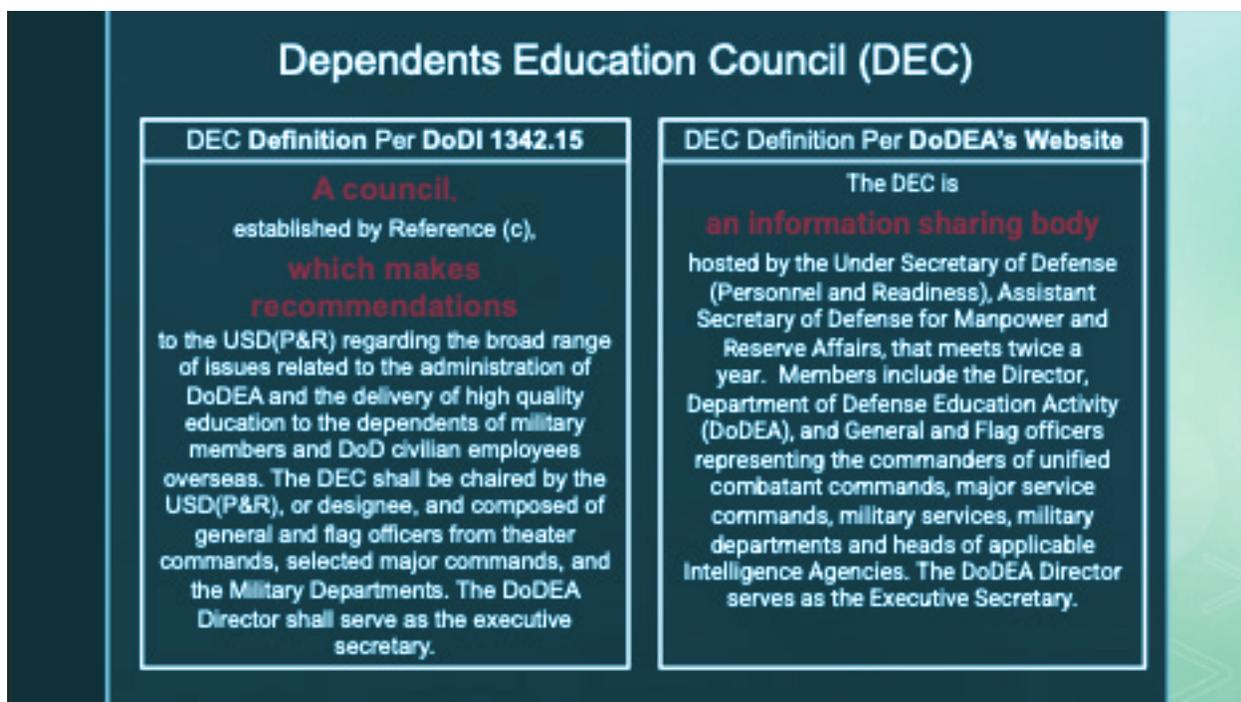
As a previous section highlighted, at the 1988 hearing the DEC was called “parents’ last point of appeal” as “an advisory body composed of representatives of the major military commands and is directed to address specific DODDS issues,” although no parents sat on the board.

DoDEA’s website<sup>40</sup> calls the DEC an “information sharing body,” instead of a council that makes recommendations to the USW P&R.<sup>41</sup> When asked for clarification in June 2025 about the purpose of the DEC, DoDEA spokesperson Jessica Tackaberry, reiterated that it was an “information-sharing body” and that it aligns with DoDEA AI 1358.01.

---

<sup>40</sup> [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council)

<sup>41</sup> Dependents Education Council, DoDEA Website, accessed 31 January 2025: [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council)



Slide courtesy of Kim Day<sup>42</sup>

After June 2021, the DEC no longer listed its attendees by name in the minutes, as had been standard practice in the past (only the presenters are documented now, and sometimes people who ask questions).<sup>43</sup> A FOIA request for DEC attendee names since 2021 yielded no responsive documents and has been appealed.<sup>44</sup>

While the DEC once hosted deliberations of policy matters, today the DEC is a platform to deliver a kind of “State of DoDEA” address for administrators to impress the higher-ranking officers attending DEC meetings.<sup>45</sup>

For example, any mention of “DEI” or “equity” is conspicuously absent from all DEC agendas and briefs from 2020 to the present, including the years 2021-2023 when the agency launched its DEI department and was later excoriated by bad press for its DEI practices.

**See Appendix A** for more detailed examples of how the DEC fails to communicate negative—though critical—updates on DoDEA. Examples cover teacher shortages, standardized testing, and special education.

<sup>42</sup> Day, Kim. “Department of Defense Education (DoDEA) Overseas Schools: Improving Education for Military Families,” PowerPoint, 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Dependents Education Council, DoDEA Website, accessed 31 January 2025. [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council)

<sup>44</sup> DoDEA, FOIA (Oct. 15, 2024), [Case Number 24-F-00175]

<sup>45</sup> “Summary,” June 20, 2024, Dependents Education Council, DoDEA Website, page 2, accessed 6 June 2025. [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council)

## 2020-24: Foundational Governance Document DoDI 1342.15 Replaced by DoDEA AI 1358.01

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

DoD issued an Instruction (DoDI 1342.15) that determined how educational advisory committees should be governed. DoDEA created an Administrative Instruction (DoDEA AI 1358.01) that was supposed to interpret the DoDI, but in fact conflicted with it. **When SAC parents noted the discrepancy and asked for clarification, they were ignored.**

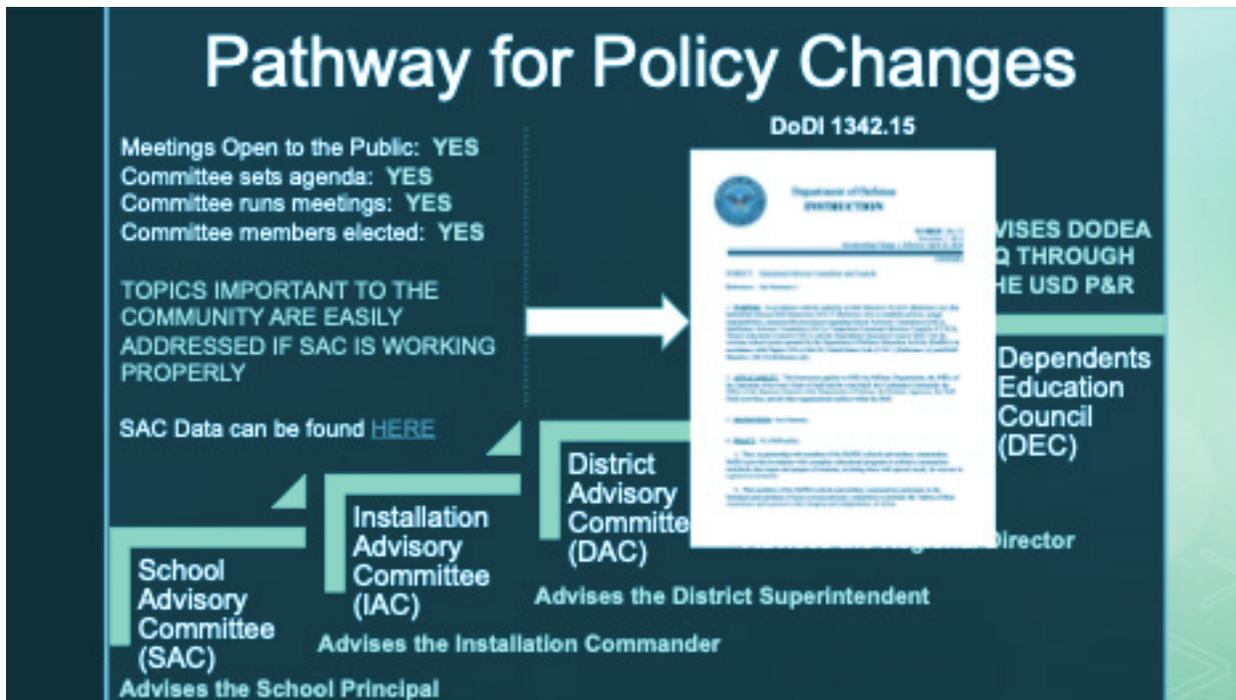
DoDEA AI officially replaced DoDI in September 2024, via memo by Schiavino-Narvaez, sowing confusing and drastically altering committee structure at the IAC level (though some of the confusion was corrected by updates made to the AI in December 2025). Among other changes, the school district superintendent, not the IAC, would now set the IAC's agenda and decide who the voting committee members are.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Research the reasons for the cancelled DoDI. Re-issue the DoDI, and deconflict the DoDI and DoDEA AI while involving parents and military stakeholders in a transparent process.

The foundational governance structure for DoDEA educational advisory committees has changed dramatically for the worse in recent years.

**Policy is set by DoD instructions, which expire and are updated periodically. Changes made in 2020 and 2024 stripped parents of their voice, and consolidated decision making within the DoDEA administration.**

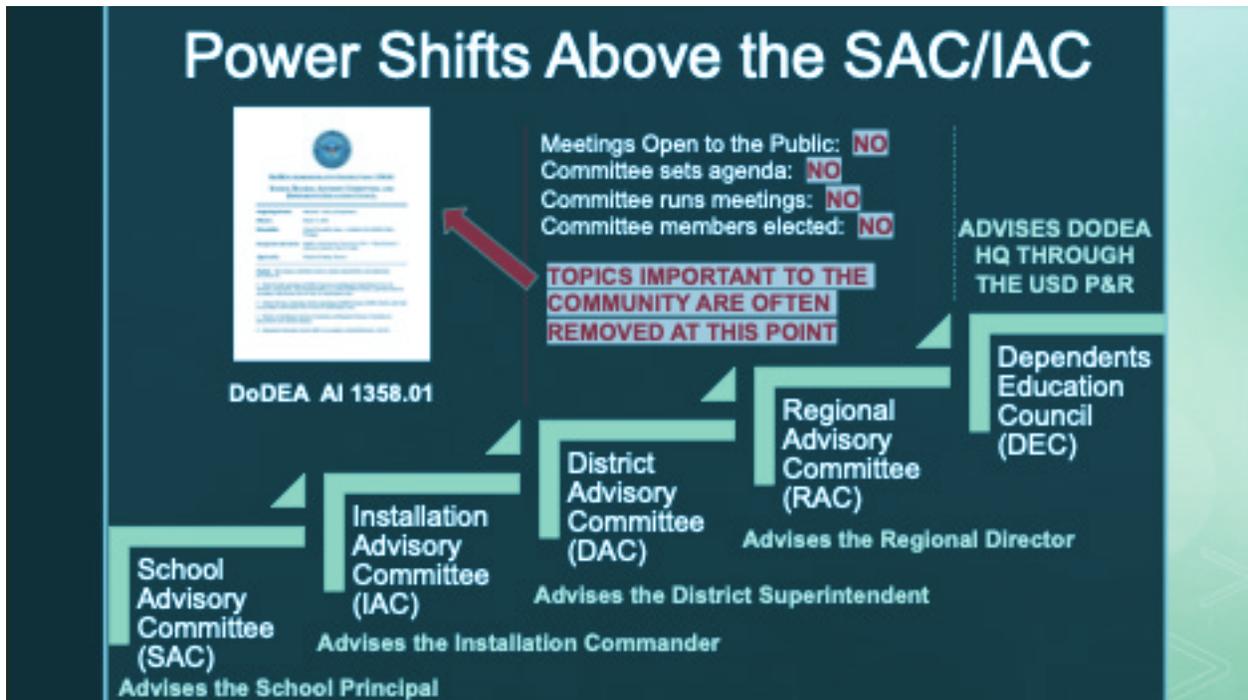


Slide courtesy of Kim Day<sup>46</sup>

DoDI 1342.15 on Educational Advisory Committees and Councils and DoDEA AI 1358.01 on School Boards, Advisory Committees, and Dependents Education Council,<sup>47</sup> had existed in tandem since 2020. The documents were conflicting, but the DoDI technically superseded the DoDEA AI.<sup>48</sup> DoDI 1342.15 was replaced entirely on September 20, 2024, by DoDEA AI 1358.01.

<sup>46</sup> Day, Kim. "Department of Defense Education (DoDEA) Overseas Schools: Improving Education for Military Families," PowerPoint, 2023.  
<sup>47</sup> [dodea.edu/regulation/school-boards-advisory-committees-and-dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/regulation/school-boards-advisory-committees-and-dependents-education-council)  
<sup>48</sup> "DoDEA Administrative Instruction 1358.01: School Boards, Advisory Committees, and Dependents Education Council," DoDEA, Effective March 2020. [dodea.edu/regulation/school-boards-advisory-committees-and-dependents-education-council](https://dodea.edu/regulation/school-boards-advisory-committees-and-dependents-education-council)

Unlike the DoDI, under the 2020 version of the DoDEA AI topics important to families could be removed from consideration after the SAC and IAC level, as the following chart demonstrates:



Slide courtesy of Kim Day<sup>49</sup>

Kim Day, spouse of an active-duty servicemember with a dependent in a U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Humphreys DoDEA school in Korea, had worked to untangle the issues caused by the DoDI/DoDEA AI conflicts at the SAC and IAC level.

**As a SAC and IAC chair, Day repeatedly reached out to school leaders—who now hold top positions in the agency, such as Michael Godfrey, DSE Lois Rapp, and Schiavino-Narvaez—for answers and to suggest solutions for the broken advisory committee system.<sup>50</sup>**

End-of-year IAC reports for school years 22/23 and 23/24 for USAG Humphreys schools noted the conflicting instructions.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Day, Kim. "Department of Defense Education (DoDEA) Overseas Schools: Improving Education for Military Families," PowerPoint, 2023.

<sup>50</sup> Email exchange between Kim Day and officials that included a response from Schiavino-Narvaez, Aug.-Sept. 2022. (PDF)

<sup>51</sup> Annual IAC Report for USAG Humphreys Schools, 5/28/2023, School Year 2022-2023. (PDF)

The **23/24 IAC report**, to the Pacific Director and other officials, requested that SACs be allowed to review and provide input before any changes were finalized.<sup>52</sup>

**That report further states that the DoDEA AI significantly increases the power of DoDEA administrators over the parent voice by:**

- Making IACs optional
- Not defining the purpose of the IAC, which the DoDI states is to advise the installation commander
- Gives the power of determining the composition of the IAC and meeting time to the District Superintendent, instead of including members elected by secret ballot from each of the SACs
- Allowing the IAC members to address issues submitted by the District Superintendent, instead of an elected committee chairperson determining the agenda
- Instead of meeting at least four times a year, the DoDEA AI determines that, *if* established, the DAC or IAC (but not both) must meet at least twice a year.

**As the report noted, the changes are “giving the perception that DoDEA is advising DoDEA.”<sup>53</sup>**

---

52 Annual IAC Report for USAG Humphreys Schools.

53 Ibid.

Below are side-by-side differences in IAC governance under DoDI and DoDEA AI (2020 version):

Installation Advisory Committee (IAC) Instruction Differences				
Instruction Name	Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1342.15		DoDEA Administrative Instruction 1358.01	
	Document Instruction	Reference	Document Instruction	Reference
Effective Date	April 20, 2020		March 31, 2020	
Operation	Ensure the IACs are established and functioning at all military installations where two or more schools are operating	Enclosure 2: 4.c (pg. 5)	DoDEA District Superintendent may establish one or multiple IACs or a single DAC, but not both.	5.1 (pg. 27)
Definition of the IAC	A committee that advises the installation commander on matters, including support, within the jurisdiction of the commander and applicable component command. Such a committee shall be established when two or more schools are operated on a military installation. The IAC is composed of the two representatives from each SAC, one parent and one professional school employee elected by the voting members of each SAC to represent them at the IAC. The student member from the high school SAC may serve on the IAC.	Glossary, (pg. 18)	No IAC definition provided in the Glossary	G.2: (pg. 34-35)
Jurisdiction	The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall: (c) Ensure that IACs are established and functioning at all military installations where two or more schools are operating	Enclosure 2: 4.c (pg. 5)	A DAC, IAC, or RAC may be established if a military installation or district or region leadership deems one is necessary.	5.1 (pg. 27)
Composition of the IAC	The IAC shall be composed of two representatives from each of the SACs, consisting of the one parent and the one professional school employee elected by secret ballot during a closed session of the SAC by the voting members to represent them on the IAC	Enclosure 4: 1.h.2 (pg. 11)	DoDEA District Superintendents determine the composition and meeting times for DACs or IACs. DoDEA School Principals, DoDEA Community Superintendents, and military commanders may provide nominations. <i>(1) Recommended Voting Members.</i> Members rotate every two (2) years, with the exception of military installation commander or their designee who may always participate. (a) A military installation commander from a military installation with schools, within the district who choose to participate. (b) A doDEA High School parent/legal guardian/sponsor from a SAC. (c) A DoDEA Middle School parent/legal guardian/sponsor from a SAC. (d) A DoDEA Elementary School parent/legal guardian/sponsor from a SAC. (e) A Dodea High School junior or senior student from a SAC. (f) A School Liaison Officer from each service. (g) A DoDEA Community Superintendent (h) A DoDEA High School Principal (i) A DoDEA Middle School Principal (j) A DoDEA Elementary School Principal (k) a DoDEA District Instructional Systems Specialist	5.3: b.1(pg.28-9)
Agenda Setting	The committee chairperson shall prepare a proposed agenda	Enclosure 4: 2.a.3 (pg. 12)	IAC members address issues submitted by the DoDEA District Superintendent	5.4: b.2(pg. 30)
Conducting the Meeting	The members of the advisory committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary at their initial meeting. Nonvoting members are not eligible for these offices. The chairperson shall thereafter conduct all meetings of the committee.	Enclosure 4: 2.b.3 (pg. 13)	No rule found	
Meeting times	Convene the SAC and IAC at least four time during the school year or more often, if needed	Enclosure 3: 2.d (pg. 7)	If established, DACs or IACs must meet a minimum of two (2) times each year.	5.4: b.3 (pg. 30)
Link to Instruction	DoDI 1342.15 Educational Advisory Committees and Councils.pdf		DoDEA AI 1358.01 School Boards, Advisory Committees, and Dependents Education Council.pdf	

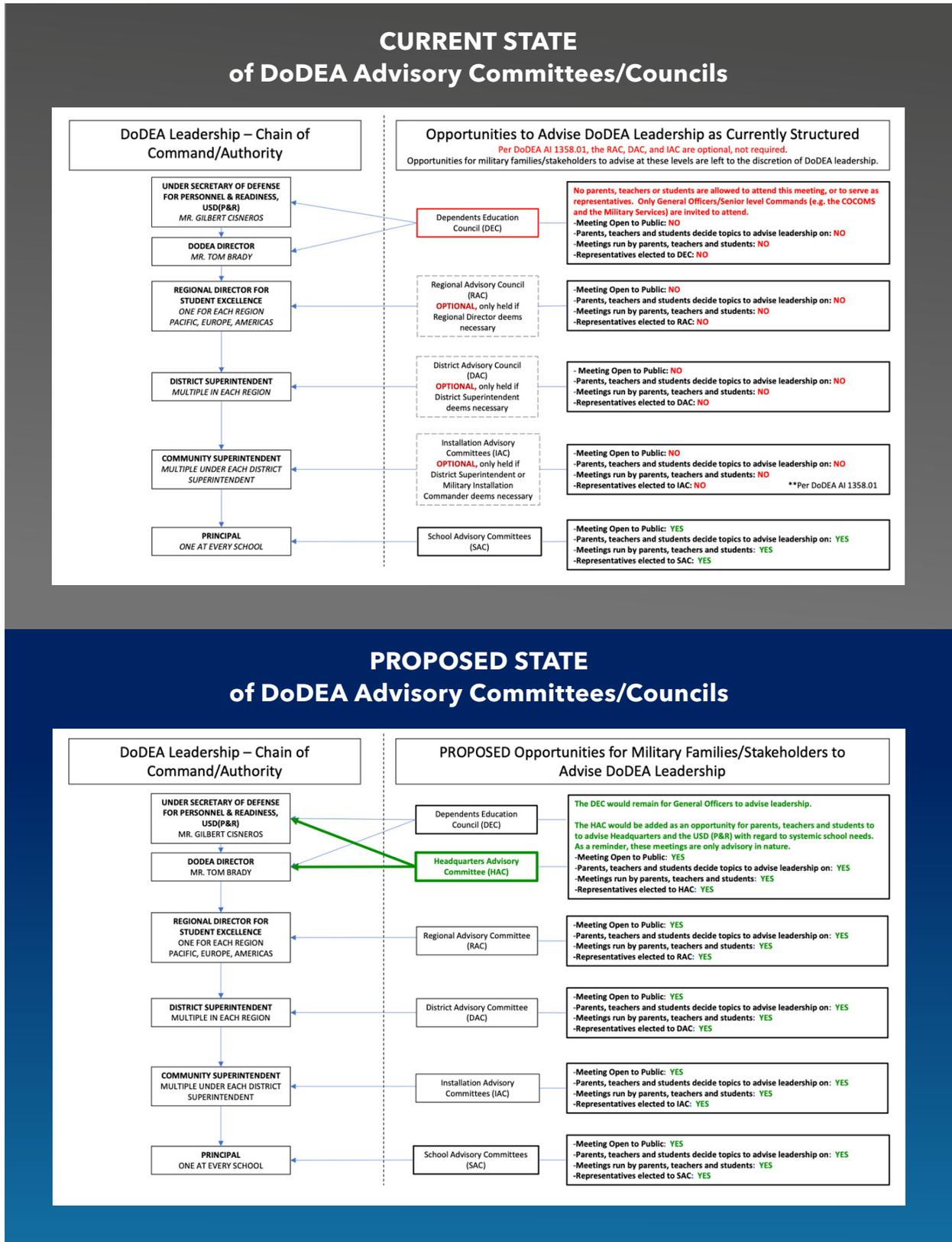
Chart courtesy of Kim Day<sup>54</sup>

Noting the discrepancies and dysfunction of the advisory committee system, Day’s school SAC at Humphreys High School (HHS) unanimously voted to advance a formal recommendation in Spring of 2023 (SY 22/23) for advisory committee reform that was sent up the chain of command.<sup>55</sup>

54 Day, Kim. Side by side chart comparing DoDI 1342.15 with DoDEA AI 1358.01.

55 Advisory Committee HHS SAC Formal Recommendations, Spring 2023. (PDF)

Below are visuals from the HHS proposal showing the SY 22/23 state of advisory committees/councils and the proposed state that allows for more parent input:



**The HHS SAC was supposed to receive a response in two weeks, but the response came nearly one year later, in February 2024, from Dr. Jacob Sherwood, Superintendent, Pacific West District, who wrote that the recommendation would be shared again up the chain of command for their consideration.<sup>56</sup>**

**The HQ response to this recommendation came another year later in March 2025. HQ rejected the proposal, and Pacific Director Rapp told the SAC that the issue was not within a SAC's purview to raise.<sup>57</sup>**

### **2024: DoDI Replaced with DoDEA AI by Director Schiavino-Narvaez**

Parents and researchers have tried unsuccessfully to obtain a copy of the cancelled DoDI via DoDEA's opaque FOIA process.<sup>58</sup> While the FOIA offices stonewalled, we were able to obtain the cancelled DoDI through another avenue.<sup>59</sup>

The DoDI was cancelled by a memo from Schiavino-Narvaez to former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Ashish Vazirani in September 2024.<sup>60</sup>

The memo reveals that the Navy requested that DoDEA retain the DoDI 1342.15 and not the DoDEA AI. The Navy observed that administrative instructions are used to implement DoD instructions. Nevertheless, in 2020 the DoDEA AI had been written in a way that conflicted with the DoDI, which should not have been allowed:

The policy, which was previously issued in a DoDI is now being issued via an AI. Since this issuance applies to government entities...outside of DoDEA, an AI is not appropriate. According to DoDI 5025.01 AIs provide general procedures for implementing policy that is already established in DoDDs [DoD Directives] or DoDIs.<sup>61</sup>

Additionally, the DoDI contained a provision that created a Theater Education Council (TEC). It said that anything "that can affect or is affecting the educational environment within the theater will be referred to the TEC." The TEC was a "council established by each geographic combatant commander to review recommendations referred to

56 "MEMORANDUM FOR: [name of parent], SAC Chairperson for HHS RE: Formal Responses to inquiries raised by HHS SAC." DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY PACIFIC WEST DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, Dr. Jacob Sherwood, February 15, 2024, page 3. [Note: [name of parent] was not actually the Chairperson, at the time]

57 MEMORANDUM THRU DoDEA Pacific West Superintendent FOR Humphreys High School Advisory Committee, 3/21/25, SUBJECT: Humphreys High School Advisory Committee Recommendations of May 17, 2023.

58 Department of Defense, FOIA (March 6, 2025), [Case Number 25-F-2143].

59 "DoD Instruction 1342.15: Educational Advisory Committees and Councils, Incorporating Change 1," Department of Defense, Effective April 20, 2020, Cancelled by USD P&R memo Sept. 19, 2024. (PDF)

60 USD P&R Memo Cancellation of DODI 1342.15. (PDF)

61 USD P&R Memo Cancellation of DODI 1342.15. (PDF)

it by a DoDEA region or component command.” It was chaired by the geographic combatant commander or designee. Its members included DoDEA area directors and component commanders (or designees).<sup>62</sup>

The DoDI also instructed that a Component Command Advisory Council (CCAC) could be established “when determined appropriate by the geographic Combatant Commander, to review IAC recommendations and to facilitate resolution of area issues.” It was co-chaired by a DoDEA area director and the commander of a component command (or designees). DoDEA administrators and an equal number of military commanders in the region would make up the membership.<sup>63</sup>

The DoDEA AI (both the 2020 and 2025 versions) stipulates that its “[i]ssuance does not apply to overseas Theater and Component Command Advisory Councils which may be established at the discretion of the appropriate military command.”<sup>64</sup> But, when the DoDI was cancelled in 2024, the DoD instructions for the purpose and formation of such military councils was also cancelled.

It could be that the TEC and CCAC were additional checks by the military chain of command on DoDEA administrators and the overall education environment. They were mentioned in the 1988 hearing and were part of the advisory board chain of command, at the time; but the DoDEA AI does not utilize them, and the advisory committee structure promoted by administrators has not included them for some time.

Regardless, the paper trail is evidence that administrators knew that parents and the Department of the Navy were concerned about and opposed to the policy changes, yet DoDEA proceeded with the cancellation over their objections.<sup>65</sup> (Note: in addition to the DoDI’s cancellation in 2024, a newer version of the DoDEA AI was published in December 2025 without parental input or the requested SAC review.)<sup>66</sup>

The DoDEA Chief of Operations, Plans, Legislation and Policy Division notified the Navy that its comment on the cancellation could not be accepted—though the Navy never concurred.

The significant change should theoretically be the sort of issue that a properly working DEC would take up. But a look back through years of DEC minutes shows no evidence that this policy was discussed.

**Given the serious issues raised by parents and the Navy, and given the lack of transparency around the DoDI’s cancellation, this needs further scrutiny.**

---

62 “DoD Instruction 1342.15: Educational Advisory Committees and Councils, Incorporating Change 1,” Department of Defense, Effective April 20, 2020, page 18.

63 Ibid, 17.

64 “DoDEA Administrative Instruction 1358.01: School Boards, Advisory Committees, and Dependents Education Council,” DoDEA, Effective March 2020, page 6. <https://www.dodea.edu/regulation/school-boards-advisory-committees-and-dependents-education-council>

65 Annual IAC Report for USAG Humphreys Schools (Central Elementary, West Elementary, Middle and High), School Year 2022-2023, May 28, 2023. (PDF)

66 [dodea.edu/offices/office-dodea-policy/publication-dodea-administrative-instruction-1358-01-school-advisory](https://dodea.edu/offices/office-dodea-policy/publication-dodea-administrative-instruction-1358-01-school-advisory)

## 2023: Partial Results Released from Stakeholder Feedback Survey Conducted by DoDEA HQ

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

Stakeholder Feedback Surveys are the last place parents can give direct feedback to DoDEA leadership, but qualitative results from the surveys are difficult to obtain, and it is unclear if or how DoDEA leadership responds to these surveys. In 2024, no qualitative option was given for the survey, again limiting opportunities for parent feedback.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Stakeholder Feedback Surveys regarding the educational experience of all families attached to the base should be conducted by base commanders. This information could be posted publicly and also shared with the DoDEA director, her supervisors at the Pentagon, and SASC/HASC personnel subcommittees. It would capture information for all families—not just those who attend the base school—and would be an additional check on the DoDEA director.

Periodically, DoDEA will conduct Stakeholder Feedback Surveys systemwide. During the Brady years, surveys were conducted in 2017, 2021, 2023, and 2024.

### Here's what the aforementioned Haywood wrote about the 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey in *DoD Schools Are a Potemkin Village*.<sup>67</sup>

If all else failed, parents knew DoDEA would be administering a stakeholder survey<sup>68</sup> to all school communities in 2023. Parents were told they would finally have a chance to speak<sup>69</sup> their minds. The results of the survey were not released for months after the stated deadline, so I submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request because I wanted to see what parents at other schools were saying. After months, I received links to the quantitative<sup>70</sup> data, but the parent comments were missing. I submitted another FOIA request for the parent comments from selected DoDEA Europe South and Europe East schools in February 2024.

Seven months later, I received the results for 12 schools spanning Germany, Spain, Italy, and Bahrain. I now understand why headquarters resisted releasing the comments to the public. Aside from the comments about a

67 [tomklingsstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/](https://tomklingsstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/)

68 [militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2023/01/19/parents-heres-your-chance-to-speak-your-mind-about-dod-schools/](https://militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2023/01/19/parents-heres-your-chance-to-speak-your-mind-about-dod-schools/)

69 [dodea.edu/news/press-releases/dodea-launches-2023-stakeholder-feedback-survey](https://dodea.edu/news/press-releases/dodea-launches-2023-stakeholder-feedback-survey)

70 [dodea.edu/education/research-accountability-and-evaluation/dodea-stakeholder-feedback-survey-sfs](https://dodea.edu/education/research-accountability-and-evaluation/dodea-stakeholder-feedback-survey-sfs)

child witnessing oral sex in the boys restroom at Patch Elementary School in Germany, the hookups happening in the “All Gender” restroom at Patch Middle School, the chaos of the 21st Century school classrooms,<sup>71</sup> and several DEI-related concerns, most of the comments<sup>72</sup> rehashed the same issues parents have been raising for decades.

But in August 2023, as headquarters continued to sit on the survey results, parents at the Bahrain School finally ditched the “chain of command” processes put in place for managing parent complaints and spoke anonymously<sup>73</sup> with a reporter. Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., were now able to now [sic] read that administrators at the lower school were stonewalling parent inquiries and violating U.S. disability law. In the older grades, the school relied on long-term subs to fill vacancies and course requirements were lax. Perhaps most damning of all, formal complaints that were filed with the DoDEA IG Office had been kicked back down to the superintendent overseeing the region, which kept everything in-house.<sup>74</sup>

*Note: 2024 Stakeholder Feedback Survey eliminated the option for qualitative feedback as there were no open comment boxes for elaboration of answers. A SY 25/26 survey has not yet been initiated, a SY 24/25 survey was not conducted, and the results from SY 23/24 have still not been uploaded to the DoDEA website.*

*See Appendix B for comments from the 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey, obtained via FOIA.*

---

<sup>71</sup> [content.dodea.edu/teach\\_learn/professional\\_development/21/facilities.html](https://content.dodea.edu/teach_learn/professional_development/21/facilities.html)

<sup>72</sup> [tomklingenstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Responsive-Documents-24-F-00063.pdf](https://tomklingenstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Responsive-Documents-24-F-00063.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> [dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/](https://dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/)

<sup>74</sup> Haywood, Amy. “DoD Schools Are a Potemkin Village,” September 18, 2024. [tomklingenstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/](https://tomklingenstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/)

## WHY ACCOUNTABILITY IS CRUCIAL: DoDEA Administrators Conspire to Deceive Parents, Congress, and the Public

### ISSUE IN BRIEF:

DoDEA staff and administrators have a years-long track record of embracing harmful pedagogical practices based in DEI and SEL. These practices include forcing children into “difficult conversations” on race, “privilege,” sexuality, and “gender,” while recording their emotions throughout the day to determine mental health “interventions.” Teachers are also on record hiding children’s “gender” changes from parents. When administrators receive pushback for these unpopular policies, they conspire to hide them without addressing reasonable criticism.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Congress should codify Trump’s executive orders related to DEI and gender ideology into legislation to protect children from these harmful ideologies. The matter is especially urgent as parent ability to participate in school governance is extremely restricted.

The circumstances surrounding the DoDEA “DEI Steering Committee” including its members and activities, should be investigated, and its members, particularly those in executive positions, should be reassigned or fired. Schiavino-Narvaez was on the committee when she served as Brady’s Chief Academic Officer.

Remove all SEL practices and supporting contracts from DoDEA schools. Remove all administrators involved in actively deceiving parents and Congress about SEL.

In July 2024, Open the Books published *Schools for Radicals*,<sup>75</sup> the most extensive look at DEI and SEL in DoDEA schools, providing a roadmap for future inquiry and reform.<sup>76</sup>

### Equity and Access Summit and DEI Cover-up

In the spring of 2021, DoDEA held the Equity and Access Summit, a teacher training with the focus of DEI. A few months later, DoDEA would officially launch its DEI Department, naming Kelisa Wing, who spoke at the summit, as its first chief.

<sup>75</sup> [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/DoDEA\\_Oversight\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/DoDEA_Oversight_Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Andrzejewski, Adam. “Schools for Radicals,” Open the Books, July 2024. [https://www.openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/DoDEA\\_Oversight\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/DoDEA_Oversight_Report_FINAL.pdf)

In September 2022, the Claremont Institute published an exposé on the summit, which showed teachers discussing how to infuse “anti-racism” and gender ideology into their classrooms, among other topics.<sup>77</sup>

An email exchange<sup>78</sup> obtained via FOIA showed that days after Claremont’s report “Grooming Future Revolutionaries” was published, DoDEA removed public access to the recordings because the report presented the agency in a negative light.<sup>79</sup>

Over the next few months, media outlets continued to expose DEI-related topics at DoDEA, such as the presence of obscenity in DoDEA’s school and online libraries,<sup>80,81</sup> teachers speaking out about Marxism,<sup>82</sup> and parents being bullied by school administrators.<sup>83</sup> **Further scrutiny followed the uncovering of DEI Chief Kelisa Wing’s racially stigmatizing tweets, including one stating she was “exhausted with these white folx.”<sup>84</sup>**

During a 2023 congressional hearing on ideological extremism at the agency, DoDEA announced that it would be dismantling its DEI department and transferring Wing to a different position.

In internal emails, however, Director Brady stated DEI specialists would be embedded into different departments throughout the agency, and a new DEI Steering Committee would be formed, composed of agency executives and administrative staff.

**As DoDEA’s ideological operations were driven deeper underground, heavy-handed FOIA redactions and years-long appeals processes prevent the public from learning more about this agency.**

**DoDEA still refuses to reveal the complete list of names of the steering committee members. An initial FOIA request in October 2023 for DEI Steering Committee Google Calendar invitations produced highly-redacted documents in November 2023, including<sup>85</sup> a 14-page slide deck with 12 redacted slides. Open the Books appealed the redactions, but the resulting production released in May 2025 was hardly less redacted.<sup>86</sup>**

77 Williams, Ryan and Scott Yenor. “Grooming Future Revolutionaries,” Claremont Institute, September 7, 2022. [dc.claremont.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Grooming-Future-Revolutionaries\\_Final.pdf](https://dc.claremont.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Grooming-Future-Revolutionaries_Final.pdf)

78 [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/Culture\\_of\\_Secrecy\\_at\\_DoDEA2.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/Culture_of_Secrecy_at_DoDEA2.pdf)

79 “Pentagon’s Secret Push to Institutionalize DEI in Its K-12 Public Schools,” Open the Books, February 2024. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/Culture\\_of\\_Secrecy\\_at\\_DoDEA2.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/Culture_of_Secrecy_at_DoDEA2.pdf)

80 Grossman, Hannah. “Pentagon Schools Infested with Shocking Pornographic Material for Military Kids,” Fox News, Oct. 27, 2022. [foxnews.com/media/pentagon-schools-infested-shocking-pornographic-material-military-kids-time-send-pic](https://foxnews.com/media/pentagon-schools-infested-shocking-pornographic-material-military-kids-time-send-pic)

81 Haywood, Amy. “Military Parents Need the Adults Working with Their Children to Be Transparent,” The Washington Stand, August 11, 2022. [washingtonstand.com/commentary/military-parents-need-the-adults-working-with-their-children-to-be-transparent](https://washingtonstand.com/commentary/military-parents-need-the-adults-working-with-their-children-to-be-transparent)

82 Grossman, Hannah. “DoDEA sources speak out about woke ‘Marxist’ indoctrination: ‘I’m not a... sexual realignment engineer,’” Fox News, January 23, 2023. [foxnews.com/media/dodea-sources-speak-out-woke-marxist-indoctrination-sexual-realignment-engineer](https://foxnews.com/media/dodea-sources-speak-out-woke-marxist-indoctrination-sexual-realignment-engineer)

83 Burrow, Micaela. “Cold and Uncaring’: U.S. Navy Parents Say Kids Suffer Discrimination, Poor Teaching at Military-run School,” Daily Caller, Aug. 12, 2023. [dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/](https://dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/)

84 Grossman, Hannah. “‘Woke’ Department of Defense equity chief writes anti-White posts: ‘Exhausted with these white folx,’” Fox News, Sept 13, 2022. [foxnews.com/media/woke-department-defense-equity-chief-writes-anti-white-posts-exhausted-white-folx](https://foxnews.com/media/woke-department-defense-equity-chief-writes-anti-white-posts-exhausted-white-folx)

85 [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/1.23\\_DoDEA\\_Steering\\_Committee\\_Calendars\\_2\\_and\\_Slides.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/1.23_DoDEA_Steering_Committee_Calendars_2_and_Slides.pdf)

86 [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/5.9\\_DoDEA\\_Calendar\\_FOIA\\_5\\_25.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/5.9_DoDEA_Calendar_FOIA_5_25.pdf)

The FOIA production did reveal several executives that served on the DEI Steering Committee, however, including Schiavino-Narvaez.

The military personnel subcommittees at HASC and SASC have ultimate oversight authority over military dependents schools. Unfortunately, DoDEA has repeatedly stonewalled congressional attempts to hold the agency accountable. Many unanswered questions remain to this day.

**Questions about transgender policies under the Biden administration are particularly troubling, especially after teachers were caught talking about hiding students' "gender identity" from parents at the Equity and Access Summit.**

**DoDEA ignored congressional requests for transgender policies from former Rep. Vicky Hartzler, and the agency has withheld 38 pages of documents responsive to a FOIA request seeking the same information. That request was appealed and remanded back to DoDEA for processing, but the FOIA office has still not released the documents, more than two years after the initial request.**<sup>87 88 89</sup>

The Trump administration has eliminated DEI and gender ideology in schools through a series of Executive Orders, though it remains to be seen to what extent intransigent administrators and educators will comply.

---

87 Amy Haywood (@AmyJHaywood): "Former US Representative Vicky Hartzler sent this letter to Sec Def Austin in 2021. A year later, she still hadn't received a response—and she never did. But military parents still want an answer!" [x.com/AmyJHaywood/status/1752676757281353961](https://x.com/AmyJHaywood/status/1752676757281353961)

88 DoDEA, FOIA Response (March 28, 2023), [Case Number 23-F-00072]. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_DoDEA\\_FOIA\\_Final\\_Response\\_Letter\\_trans\\_non\\_binary\\_38\\_pages\\_withheld\\_\(23-F-00072\).pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_DoDEA_FOIA_Final_Response_Letter_trans_non_binary_38_pages_withheld_(23-F-00072).pdf)

89 Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency, DoDEA Appeal response (April 19, 2024), [Ref: 23-AC-0064-A1, Case Number 23-F-00072]. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_DoDEA\\_FOIA\\_Final\\_Response\\_Letter\\_trans\\_non\\_binary\\_38\\_pages\\_withheld\\_\(23-F-00072\).pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_DoDEA_FOIA_Final_Response_Letter_trans_non_binary_38_pages_withheld_(23-F-00072).pdf)

## Social Emotional Learning in Practice and DoDEA's Cover-up

The systemic issues that have become part of the fabric of DoDEA have only been compounded by the addition of DEI. We now have evidence that SEL is also being rapidly implemented at the school-level—despite congressional inquiries into SEL that were ignored.

**Additionally, recorded evidence from a Winter Planning event held at DoDEA HQ in January 2025 reveals that top leaders are conspiring and acting to conceal unpopular SEL initiatives.<sup>90</sup>**

Eighteen members of Congress penned a letter<sup>91</sup> to former Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin that gave him a deadline of August 16, 2024, to answer questions about DEI topics being foisted on military children in DoDEA schools.<sup>92</sup> Some of those questions included concerns about SEL.

The Members of Congress wanted to know why DoDEA was implementing an SEL curriculum and how DoDEA was protecting the student data that was “being collected through SEL requirements and shared with tech platforms” like Google products made for schools. A congressional staffer confirmed that no answers had been received by the deadline.

Not only was this congressional letter ignored, but SEL initiatives are plowing full steam ahead, falling under one of three priorities this school year for Schiavino-Narvaez under her Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Initiative.<sup>93</sup>

At the school level, this initiative seems to be on the fast track. On December 27, 2024, administrators at Humphreys West Elementary School (HWES) in Korea informed parents about a new discipline program that would be using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and an after-school detention component for grades K through 4.

The detention would be an hour long and was “designed to provide students with a structured environment where they can engage in lessons and activities that allow them to reflect on their behavior, understand the importance of adhering to school rules and build resiliency.”

---

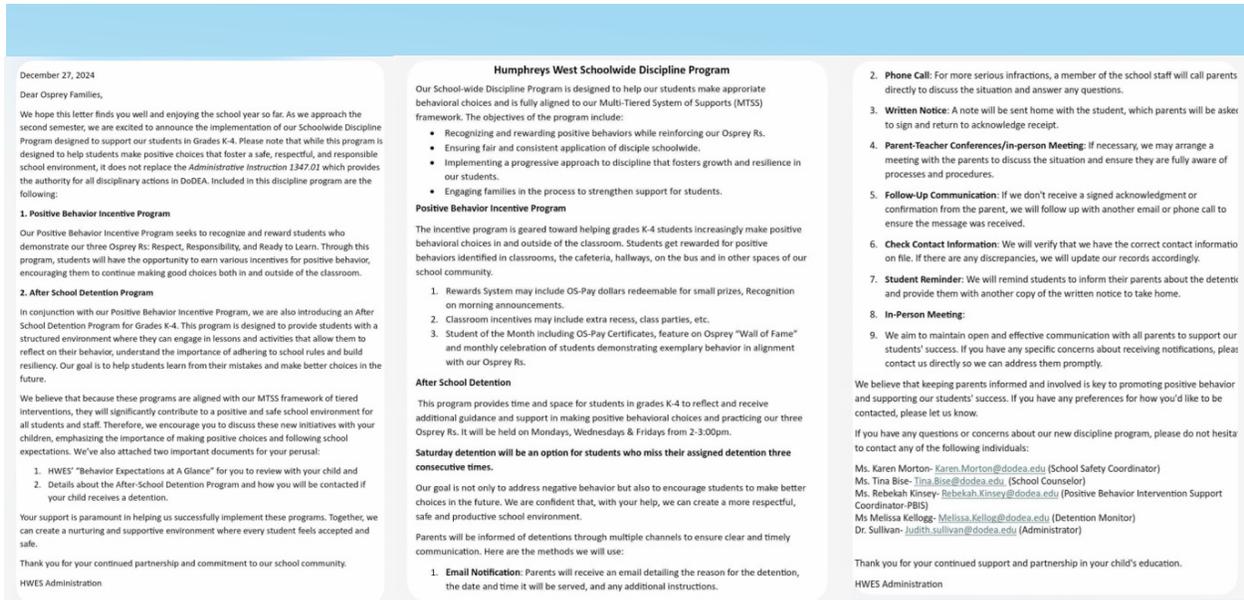
90 Mitchell, Elizabeth. “‘No Exceptions’: Pentagon Schools Defy Hegseth by Renaming DEI Efforts,” *Daily Signal*. Feb. 11, 2025. [dailysignal.com/2025/02/11/no-exceptions-pentagon-schools-defy-hegseth-renaming-dei-effort/](https://dailysignal.com/2025/02/11/no-exceptions-pentagon-schools-defy-hegseth-renaming-dei-effort/)

91 [nationalreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/754619476-Stefanik-GOP-letter-to-Lloyd-Austin.pdf](https://nationalreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/754619476-Stefanik-GOP-letter-to-Lloyd-Austin.pdf)

92 “Letter to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin,” July 29, 2024, U.S. House of Representatives. [nationalreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/754619476-Stefanik-GOP-letter-to-Lloyd-Austin.pdf](https://nationalreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/754619476-Stefanik-GOP-letter-to-Lloyd-Austin.pdf)

93 “2024 DoDEA Director’s Update,” DoDEA Communications, November 2024. [youtube.com/watch?v=D1cLQ\\_zfYJk](https://youtube.com/watch?v=D1cLQ_zfYJk)

The letter did not elaborate on what teaching materials or curriculum would be used for the lessons and activities, but it specified that the program was aligned with their MTSS framework of tiered interventions. MTSS is often a part of SEL implementation in schools.<sup>94</sup>



*2024 letter to parents at Humphreys West Elementary School (HWES) in Korea informing them about a new discipline program that would be using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and an after-school detention component for grades K through 4.*

But HWES parent comments online registered surprise, concern, and skepticism about the age appropriateness of an hour-long detention for the K through 4 age group. Furthermore, the SAC was not consulted or informed about the change.

One parent registered “dread” about sending her children back after break. Another mom had already pulled her students from the school but suggested questions that other parents needed to be asking about the program because the process in which a detention is obtained—the scale for it, how it’s determined—was not explained.

94 Humphreys West Elementary School Administrators. “Letter to Parents on Humphreys West Schoolwide Discipline Program,” Dec. 27, 2024.

## The Secret Meeting

In addition to the implementation of SEL at the school level, we now know that DoDEA leaders are working to hide information about SEL from parents and Congress.

In a recording<sup>95</sup> from the January 2025 Winter Planning event at DoDEA HQ, which included DoDEA MTSS Specialist Daniel Petritz, Pacific Director Rapp, Chief of Instructional Leadership Development in the Pacific Chris Marczak, former Communications Director Will Griffin, and others (a shout out was given to a “Mr. Brady,” presumably Chief Operating Officer Robert Brady), **administrators discussed the need to replace the term “SEL” with “resilience.”**

**The switch, they reasoned, would raise fewer alarms as it’s a term that military families have long understood.<sup>96</sup> They conspired to scrub as many references to SEL as possible, though it would be difficult.**

Rapp discussed the necessity of communicating these changes via word-of-mouth so that groups like Open the Books, which was named explicitly in the meeting, couldn’t seize on it and create more negative attention for the organization.<sup>97</sup>

Days later, DoDEA began pushing out stories<sup>98</sup> that emphasized “resilience” and even changed the logo inside the **Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, Volume 5, which had been published in 2023, by swapping out “social-emotional” for “resilience,” “behavioral” for “well-being,” and “academic” for “achievement.”<sup>99,100,101</sup> This logo swap was discussed in the recorded conversation.**

---

95 [x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184](https://x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184)

96 @libsoftiktok, “SCOOP: We obtained audio of a meeting between top officials at . They discuss their plans to rebrand “Social Emotional Learning” as “Resilience” to avoid public backlash. @doge,” X, Feb. 19, 2025, 1:57pm. [x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184](https://x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1892287406503596184).

97 Winter Planning meeting recording, DoDEA Headquarters, Mark Center, Alexandria, Virginia, Jan. 6, 2025.

98 [army.mil/article/282515/dodeas-decades-long-commitment-to-building-resilience-drives-top-academic-performance](https://army.mil/article/282515/dodeas-decades-long-commitment-to-building-resilience-drives-top-academic-performance)

99 O’Day, Michael. “DODEA’s Decades-long Commitment to Building Resilience Drives Top Academic Performance,” DoDEA Press Release, January 15, 2025. [dvidshub.net/news/489011/dodeas-decades-long-commitment-building-resilience-drives-top-academic-performance](https://dvidshub.net/news/489011/dodeas-decades-long-commitment-building-resilience-drives-top-academic-performance)

100 “Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, Volume 5,” Department of Defense Education Activity, 2023. (original PDF) [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_Blueprint\\_Volume\\_V\\_September\\_2023.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_Blueprint_Volume_V_September_2023.pdf)

101 “Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, Volume 5,” Department of Defense Education Activity, 2023 [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_tampered\\_with\\_blueprint-volume-v-2023-september.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_tampered_with_blueprint-volume-v-2023-september.pdf). [dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources](https://dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement/resources) (this is version altered in January 2025)

It wasn't enough to move forward in their quest for "continuous improvement"—administrators were now reaching into the past to change the narrative. And with fewer pathways for parents to object, what can be done to stop them?

## EDITED TO AVOID SCRUTINY

ORIGINAL	AMENDED
 <p><b>DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE</b></p>	 <p><b>DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE</b></p>
<p>Dear Parents, Students, Staff, and Members of Our Community,</p> <p>Since the 2018-2019 School Year, DoDEA's strategic plan, the Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, has provided a roadmap for DoDEA to Educate, Engage, and Empower military-connected students to succeed in a dynamic world. We update this plan annually to reflect our progress and respond to changes in DoDEA's landscape, always considering DoDEA's core values guide our actions and interactions. As you read this plan, you will see our core values represented in our student-centered approach, reach for excellence, dedication to continuous improvement, pledge to support lifelong learning, embrace of diversity, belief in individual potential, commitment to shared responsibility, and reliance on trust. While every Strategic Initiative within the Blueprint is critical to our success, in my Director's Focus for School Year 2023-2024, I identify two priorities that nest within four Strategic Initiatives that will have impacts across our system: instituting a Multi-Tiered System of Support and ensuring a Fully Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom. Together, they highlight our core value of being student-centered. As a result of these two priorities, starting on the first day of school, DoDEA students will be instructed by fully qualified teachers who understand the full range of their social-emotional and academic needs.</p>	<p>Dear Parents, Students, Staff, and Members of Our Community,</p> <p>Since the 2018-2019 School Year, DoDEA's strategic plan, the Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, has provided a roadmap for DoDEA to Educate, Engage, and Empower military-connected students to succeed in a dynamic world. We update this plan annually to reflect our progress and respond to changes in DoDEA's landscape, always considering DoDEA's core values guide our actions and interactions. As you read this plan, you will see our core values represented in our student-centered approach, reach for excellence, dedication to continuous improvement, pledge to support lifelong learning, belief in individual potential, commitment to shared responsibility, and reliance on trust. While every Strategic Initiative within the Blueprint is critical to our success, in my Director's Focus for School Year 2023-2024, I identify two priorities that nest within four Strategic Initiatives that will have impacts across our system: instituting a Multi-Tiered System of Support and ensuring a Fully Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom. Together, they highlight our core value of being student-centered. As a result of these two priorities, starting on the first day of school, DoDEA students will be instructed by fully qualified teachers who understand the full range of their social-emotional and academic needs.</p>
<p>Multi-Tiered System of Support:</p> <p><b>SI 1.1: Equitable Learning Experiences for All Students</b></p> <p>To provide equitable opportunities for students in a safe and secure learning environment, we will implement programs and support to address achievement gaps between racial, ethnic, ability, and other identified groups.</p> <p><b>SI 1.2: Successful Transition to College, Career, and Life</b></p> <p>Develop comprehensive programs to support students throughout their primary and secondary education for their transition to college, career, and life.</p> <p><b>SI 2.1: Instructional Improvement</b></p> <p>Develop, monitor, and continue to improve instructional practices to ensure excellence in student learning.</p> <p>DoDEA will develop a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for all students. It is crucial to address each student's needs.</p>	<p>Multi-Tiered System of Support:</p> <p><b>SI 1.1: Equitable Learning Experiences for All Students</b></p> <p>To provide equitable opportunities for students in a safe and secure learning environment, we will implement programs and support to address achievement gaps between racial, ethnic, ability, and other identified groups.</p> <p><b>SI 1.2: Successful Transition to College, Career, and Life</b></p> <p>Develop comprehensive programs to support students throughout their primary and secondary education for their transition to college, career, and life.</p> <p><b>SI 2.1: Instructional Improvement</b></p> <p>Develop, monitor, and continue to improve instructional practices to ensure excellence in student learning.</p> <p>DoDEA will develop a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for all students. It is crucial to address each student's needs.</p>
	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #2e8b57; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Social-Emotional Behavioral Academic</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">IS NOW</div> <div style="background-color: #2e8b57; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Resilience Well-being Achievement</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #2e8b57; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Resilience Well-being Achievement</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">IS NOW</div> <div style="background-color: #2e8b57; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Social-Emotional Behavioral Academic</div> </div>
<p><b>PUBLISHED IN 2023, EDITED IN 2025</b></p>	

## CONCLUSION: Voice of DoDEA Administration has Grown at the Expense of Parents

It is true that some families report having great experiences with DoDEA schools, and pockets of excellence do exist within the system. It's also true that military dependents' schools are exceptionally safe and that military children and families are supportive of each other as they navigate life together in a foreign country.

But when parents run into a school-level issue that they are unable to resolve through the advisory council channels they've been given or through the IG process, the entire overseas experience is often overshadowed. Children are short-changed and put at risk, and readiness is compromised.

Because of the high turnover of military families at DoDEA schools and in the Office of the USW P&R, and because issues discussed at advisory boards from the school level up to the DEC are not tracked with fidelity, many issues are lost in the shuffle and are rehashed on a cyclical basis without being solved. The only constant seems to be the underlying DoDEA bureaucracy.

Instead of becoming the open and accountable system that was the goal of the 1988 hearing and the subsequent GAO investigation, DoDEA appears to have gone backward. The below conclusion from the hearing is still true today:

In summary, military parents of children in the DoDDS system demand the ability to influence their children's education just as their civilian peers in the United States do through their school boards. Military parents are taxpayers. DoDDS schools are their schools. Currently, parental input can be and is stifled at any level—if the principal and/or the local commander do not take action, the input ends. Avenues are established on paper...They do not work because no one at any level is held accountable.<sup>102</sup>

DoDEA is a nice idea that has worked for some and has been an utter failure for others. It is time to try something new—whether that be to give parents real school boards, to completely overhaul leadership and the organization, or to give military kids the same options State Department kids have overseas for choice in schools. In the parlance of standardized testing, it may be “D) all of the above.”

---

102 “DoD Dependents Schools: Hearing before the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services,” House of Representatives, 100th Congress, (1988), page 19. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000016131743&seq=5>

**Parents have had ideas about this all along—if only someone had listened.**

*Note: This report only scratches the surface of issues facing DoDEA. We did not even touch upon:*

- The employees fired and/or discriminated against because of refusal to take the Covid 19 vaccine
- The federal workforce ranking<sup>103</sup> for 2024 in which DoDEA ranked 146 out of 154 midsize subcomponent agencies. For “effective leadership: senior leaders,” it came in at 154 out of 154.<sup>104</sup>
- The DoDEA Grants Program, which funds many DEI-related initiatives.<sup>105</sup> A past DoD IG audit report already showed serious monitoring issues with the grants program.<sup>106</sup>
- The inability of SAC members to view individual school budgets and the need for a forensic audit of the organization.

**However, giving parents a voice in DoDEA governance can be the first step in checking the growing power of agency administrators and addressing these and other issues plaguing the agency.**

---

103 [bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/?c=DD16](https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/?c=DD16)

104 “Department of Defense Education Activity,” Best Places to Work in the Federal Government, Partnership for Public Service, 2024. [bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/?c=DD16](https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/?c=DD16)

105 DoDEA Grant Program FY24 Awards, Military-Connected Local Education Agencies for Academic and Support Programs (MCASP), World Language Advancement and Readiness Program (WLARP), DoDEA (PDF)

106 “Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, Department of Defense Education Activity Grant Oversight Audit,” DODIG-2022-001, October 5, 2021. [dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/2803900/department-of-defense-education-activity-grant-oversight-dodig-2022-001/](https://dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/2803900/department-of-defense-education-activity-grant-oversight-dodig-2022-001/)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Open the Books would like to acknowledge Amy Haywood for her substantial research contributions to this report.

Haywood has also written extensively and is a respected voice on this topic:

- [School Choice Could Break the DOD's Woke Education Machine](#)<sup>107</sup>
- [DoD Schools are a Potemkin Village](#)<sup>108</sup>
- [Military Kids Deserve School Choice Too](#)<sup>109</sup>
- [DoD Prompts Gender Dysphoria in Military Kids and Hides Health Records from Parents](#)<sup>110</sup>
- [Defense Department is Boxing Parents Out of their Children's Medical Care and Records](#)<sup>111</sup>

We also thank the other military spouses mentioned in this report, and those who wish to remain anonymous, for their insight and contributions.

## FURTHER READING

Open the Books' record on DoDEA reporting is robust and has been cited in congressional hearings and many media outlets. Some original articles include:



- Report: [Schools for Radicals](#)<sup>112</sup>
- [Controversial DoD Employee Pops Back Up at Education Department](#)<sup>113</sup>
- [Pentagon Secretly Institutionalized DEI in its K-12 Public Schools](#)<sup>114</sup>
- [Military Stonewalls Investigation into Controversial Diversity Official Leading K-12 Schools](#)<sup>115</sup>

107 [tomklingenstein.com/school-choice-could-break-the-dods-woke-education-machine/](https://tomklingenstein.com/school-choice-could-break-the-dods-woke-education-machine/)

108 [tomklingenstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/](https://tomklingenstein.com/dod-schools-are-a-potemkin-village/)

109 [thefederalist.com/2024/07/18/military-kids-deserve-school-choice-too/](https://thefederalist.com/2024/07/18/military-kids-deserve-school-choice-too/)

110 [thefederalist.com/2024/04/29/dod-prompts-gender-dysphoria-among-military-kids-and-hides-health-records-from-parents/](https://thefederalist.com/2024/04/29/dod-prompts-gender-dysphoria-among-military-kids-and-hides-health-records-from-parents/)

111 [thefederalist.com/2023/07/26/defense-department-is-boxing-parents-out-of-their-childrens-medical-care-and-records/](https://thefederalist.com/2023/07/26/defense-department-is-boxing-parents-out-of-their-childrens-medical-care-and-records/)

112 [openthebooks.com/schools-for-radicals--openthebooks-oversight-report/](https://openthebooks.com/schools-for-radicals--openthebooks-oversight-report/)

113 [openthebooks.substack.com/p/diversity-whack-a-mole-controversial](https://openthebooks.substack.com/p/diversity-whack-a-mole-controversial)

114 [openthebooks.substack.com/p/pentagon-secretly-institutionalized](https://openthebooks.substack.com/p/pentagon-secretly-institutionalized)

115 [openthebooks.substack.com/p/military-stonewalling-on-controversial](https://openthebooks.substack.com/p/military-stonewalling-on-controversial)

## ACRONYM KEY

<b>ACDE</b>	Advisory Council on Dependents' Education
<b>AFT</b>	American Federation of Teachers
<b>ASW M&amp;RA</b>	Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
<b>CCAC</b>	Component Command Advisory Council
<b>CCRS</b>	College and Career Ready Standards
<b>COO</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>DAC</b>	District Advisory Committee
<b>DEC</b>	Dependents Education Council
<b>DEI</b>	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
<b>DoDDS</b>	Department of Defense Dependents Schools (a past name for DoDEA)
<b>DoDEA</b>	Department of Defense Education Activity
<b>DoDEA AI</b>	DoDEA Administrative Instruction
<b>DoDI</b>	Department of Defense Instruction
<b>DoW</b>	Department of War (also known as the Department of Defense or DoD)
<b>DSE</b>	Director of Student Excellence
<b>FEA</b>	Federal Education Association
<b>FOIA</b>	Freedom of Information Act
<b>GAO</b>	Government Accountability Office
<b>HASC</b>	House Armed Services Committee
<b>HHS</b>	Humphreys High School
<b>HWES</b>	Humphreys West Elementary School
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>IAC</b>	Installation Advisory Committee
<b>IG</b>	Inspector General
<b>MTSS</b>	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
<b>NAEP</b>	National Assessment of Educational Progress
<b>NMFA</b>	National Military Family Association
<b>PBIS</b>	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
<b>RAC</b>	Regional Advisory Committee
<b>SAC</b>	School Advisory Committee
<b>SASC</b>	Senate Armed Services Committee
<b>SEL</b>	Social Emotional Learning
<b>SY</b>	School Year
<b>TEC</b>	Theater Education Council
<b>USW P&amp;R</b>	Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (formerly called Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness)

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A:

The following are more examples of issues plaguing DoDEA that are not brought to the attention of DEC during its meetings.

### Example 1: Teacher Shortages

In School Year 22/23, parent comments<sup>116</sup> obtained via FOIA from the 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey conducted by HQ often noted an over-reliance on long-term substitute<sup>117</sup> teachers and teachers that frequently move into and out of schools.<sup>118 119</sup>

Likewise, the FEA's August 2023 *Journal* reported "deep shortages of certified educators in their schools," adding:

While DoDEA has not provided total figures, FEA was able to ascertain, through educator input, there were 164 certified educator vacancies and 232 long-term subs employed in the Pacific at beginning of last school year. With the lack of transparency from DoDEA, information shared from FEA members is crucial in enabling the Association to advocate for change.

A member from the Pacific explained the dire shortage in their school:

"Almost half of all teacher and support staff positions were filled by long-term subs. And I'm not talking about a class having a sub for a week. We had a whole semester where we had a substitute teaching core classes."<sup>120</sup>

Yet, a look back at the minutes from the January 2023 DEC<sup>121</sup> meeting shows no mention of the on-going teacher shortage.<sup>122</sup>

Pacific Director Rapp did not bring up the "dire" teacher shortage in her region during the meeting. But according to the Pacific's RAC Minutes for November 2022, there were 350 vacancies over 48 schools.<sup>123</sup> It was claimed in the minutes that those vacancies were filled with qualified teachers by the end of November, but that doesn't match what teachers conveyed to the FEA.

116 [theprimaryeducator.com/downloads](https://theprimaryeducator.com/downloads)

117 [dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/](https://dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/)

118 "Downloads," The Primary Educator. [theprimaryeducator.com/downloads](https://theprimaryeducator.com/downloads)

119 Burrow, Micaela. "Cold and Uncaring": U.S. Navy Parents Say Kids Suffer Discrimination, Poor Teaching at Military-run School," Daily Caller, August 12, 2023. [dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/](https://dailycaller.com/2023/08/12/parents-military-kids-education-bahrain-school/)

120 "In Wake of Shortages, Staffing Remains Key FEA Concern," *Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 1, August 2023, Federal Education Association, pages 1-4. [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_August\\_2023\\_FEA\\_Journal\\_Teacher\\_Shortage.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_August_2023_FEA_Journal_Teacher_Shortage.pdf)

121 [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0)

122 "Summary," June 2023, Dependents Education Council, pages 10-13. [https://www.dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category\[997425\]=997425&page=0](https://www.dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category[997425]=997425&page=0)

123 Pacific Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, November 2022, pages 3-4. (PDF) [openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28\\_Pacific\\_RAC\\_Meeting\\_Minutes\\_November\\_2022.pdf](https://openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/3.28_Pacific_RAC_Meeting_Minutes_November_2022.pdf)

COO Robert Brady did talk about “several challenges in teacher hiring” during the DEC meeting, and he cited a “9.8% vacancy rate.” He said that DoDEA closed that gap “at the end of September and October to a very low vacancy rate.”

Then he pivoted to his Teacher Hiring Project, and the accompanying slide showed that the “DoDEA Director’s number one strategic priority is to ensure that there is a fully qualified teacher in every classroom.”

An attendee asked the COO how many teachers short DoDEA was across the world. He didn’t know offhand and would have to go back and look at the actual number.<sup>124</sup>

It is difficult to see how DEC attendees could understand issues at DoDEA when agency leaders repeatedly spin the data—all while emphatically professing to be a “data-driven” organization.

## **Example 2: Testing and Career Readiness Scores**

The same pattern of presenting partial information is used when leaders talk about National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores while downplaying less-than-favorable results from other learning assessments.

DoDEA leadership often brags about DoDEA’s place as the top public school system due to higher-than-average NAEP scores, while little noting DoDEA’s own College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) Interim and Summative Assessments<sup>125</sup>.

The latter are a truer picture of how well students are learning material taught at DoDEA schools over the course of a year, and those results are not as flattering. (The only two reports on CCRS results posted publicly are from 2018 and 2019.)<sup>126</sup>

A FOIA response for SY 23/24 CCRS results for English Language Arts and Math shows widely varying results for 160 schools.<sup>127</sup>

Some schools show 0% of students exceeding or meeting expectations for various grade levels or subjects; while others post high percentages of students exceeding or meeting expectations.

This information could be useful to military parents should they have a choice in overseas assignments, but DoDEA leadership stated at the January 2025 DEC meeting that the schools will no longer be using CCRS data for summative assessments of student learning for 8<sup>th</sup> grade through high school.

Instead, the PSAT and SAT will now be used as the summative assessment for 8<sup>th</sup>

---

124 “Summary,” June 2023, Dependents Education Council, page 23. [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category\[997425\]=997425&page=0](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category[997425]=997425&page=0)

125 [dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results](https://dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results)

126 CCRS Summative Assessment. Comprehensive Assessment Program, DoDEA Website, accessed 31 Jan. 2025. [dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results](https://dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results)

127 DoDEA, FOIA Response (May 15, 2025), [Case Number 25-F-00081].

grade and high school, respectively.<sup>128</sup> This move is contrary to recommendations in the GAO report from 1990 that more than just standardized national tests should be used to evaluate academic success.<sup>129</sup>

This may be a response to another GAO report, from 2023, that showed children were being over tested in DoDEA schools. The report showed that the amount of “time DODEA students spent taking required standardized tests varied across districts, from about 15 to 38 school days, across grades K-12.” It was an average of about 8 days more than their public-school counterparts.<sup>130</sup>

## Problems with NAEP at DoDEA

Tests like NAEP “do not provide scores for individual students or schools,” per DoDEA’s website.<sup>131</sup> And a report from the National Center on Education and the Economy revealed that at least three studies have shown that researchers are unable to explain how much credit for better NAEP scores is due to DoDEA schools, how much could be attributed to students’ being from military families, and how much could be attributed to schools attended prior to DoDEA.

It makes sense that scores would be higher for kids coming from a population that is highly selective and does not include the extreme poverty found in civilian public schools.<sup>132</sup>

An independent review conducted in 2000 by the Institute for Defense Analyses even suggested how DoDEA could measure its contribution to student achievement, but evidently it is an avenue DoDEA has chosen not to pursue.<sup>133</sup>

Another avenue, which parents have suggested, would be to add a check box to NAEP as an identifier for military children. Then, results for military children attending U.S. public schools and international private schools could be compared with those attending DoDEA schools.

128 “Agenda and Briefs,” January 15, 2025, Dependents Education Council, page 10, accessed 15 May 2025. [dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0](https://dodea.edu/education/dependents-education-council/agendas-briefs-information-papers-executive-summaries?category%5b997425%5d=997425&page=0)

129 U.S. Government Accountability Office, “DoD Overseas Schools: Additional Assurances of Educational Quality Needed,” GAO/HRD-90-13, 1990, pages 19-20. [gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13](https://www.gao.gov/products/hrd-90-13)

130 U.S. Government Accountability Office, “K-12 Education: Better Planning Could Help DoD Schools Implement Changes to Standardized Testing,” GAO-24-106322, October 16, 2023, page 1. [gao.gov/assets/870/862406.pdf](https://www.gao.gov/assets/870/862406.pdf)

131 “Comprehensive Assessment Program,” DoDEA. [dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results](https://dodea.edu/education/assessment/system-wide-results), Accessed May 21, 2025.

132 Heller, Rafael. *The Relentless Improver: The U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) School System*. Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy, 2024, pages 3-4. [drive.google.com/file/d/1-ZyrSg42HspiMzTmb39mWfquDTcNysfR/view?pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-ZyrSg42HspiMzTmb39mWfquDTcNysfR/view?pli=1)

133 Anderson, Lowell, et. al. “Review of Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) Schools, Volume II: Quantitative Analysis of Educational Quality,” Institute for Defense Analyses, October 2000, pages VI-1. [apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA394234.pdf](https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA394234.pdf)

### Example 3: Special Education

Special education is also selectively reported to the DEC, which delivers glowing reports about assistive technology and other specialized services that are tailored to meet students' needs.<sup>134</sup>

The DEC meeting summary for January 2022 reveals, for example, that there were 1,100 autistic children in the system, and some were supported by personalized robots.

But DEC members do not hear from the many families on the ground who are unable to have IEPs followed for months into the school year (or ever) and who have spent thousands on legal fees in order to force DoDEA to accommodate their children as required by disability law.<sup>135</sup>

Communication with families is so poor that some families learned of a plan to mainstream students with learning disabilities into general ed classrooms through a *Stars and Stripes* article in 2023.<sup>136</sup>

Many families of special needs children have joined together in groups like Partners in Promise<sup>137</sup> and the Military Kids Special Education Alliance<sup>138</sup> to advocate for their children in overseas and domestic schools.<sup>139</sup>

---

134 "Summary," January 13, 2022, Dependents Education Council, pages 4,5,6.

135 Haywood, Amy. "School Choice Could Break the DoD's Woke Education Machine," *TomKlingenstein.com*, 13 Feb. 2025. [tomklingenstein.com/school-choice-could-break-the-dods-woke-education-machine/](https://tomklingenstein.com/school-choice-could-break-the-dods-woke-education-machine/)

136 Burke, Matthew. "DODEA plans to wrap up changes to special education by next school year," *Stars and Stripes*, November 8, 2023. [stripes.com/theaters/asia\\_pacific/2023-11-08/special-education-defense-department-schools-11979767.html](https://stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2023-11-08/special-education-defense-department-schools-11979767.html)

137 Partners in Promise, [thepromiseact.org](https://thepromiseact.org)

138 [facebook.com/share/p/179proXfyd/](https://facebook.com/share/p/179proXfyd/)

139 Military Kids Special Education Alliance, June 14, 2024, Facebook. [facebook.com/groups/militarykidspecialeducationalliance/permalink/7629681080482514/?rdid=RN765pxVRisOk7uW&share\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2Fp%2F179proXfyd%2F](https://facebook.com/groups/militarykidspecialeducationalliance/permalink/7629681080482514/?rdid=RN765pxVRisOk7uW&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2Fp%2F179proXfyd%2F)

## Appendix B:

The following are comments from parents and other stakeholders, obtained through either the official DoDEA Stakeholder Feedback Survey in 2023, or through comments sent directly to military spouse Haywood related to her reporting on DoDEA.

### 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey Comments

Here is a link to the aforementioned comments from the 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey conducted by DoDEA HQ. These are from numerous schools in the Pacific, Europe, and the Americas. More comments will be posted to the linked site from additional schools as additional FOIA requests are filled:

[theprimaryeducator.com/downloads](https://theprimaryeducator.com/downloads).<sup>140</sup>

### SAMPLING OF COMMENTS (ORIGINAL COMMENTS INCLUDE TYPOS):

*I don't believe we have any real impact on curriculum that is taught....Also, enough with the choosing of one's pronouns and teaching that a child can choose their gender. This is wrong. They are born one of only two genders and they don't have a choice in what that is. Science does not support the ability to change one's gender, so I would appreciate it not being taught to my children.*

–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany

*Overall, I've been happy with my child's experience at this school, however, I'm concerned about the trend toward confirming a child's "chosen" gender and adults lying to these confused children. Race and gender indoctrination should have no place in the classroom.*

–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany

*I'm worried that having an all gender bathroom at the school that my daughter will eventually feel pressured to engage in sexual behavior to fit in with her peers. The bathroom is used as a hookup spot for the kids.*

–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany

*Please stop teaching race and gender bias. Our children are not victims or aggressors based on the color of their skin.*

–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany

---

<sup>140</sup> [theprimaryeducator.com/downloads](https://theprimaryeducator.com/downloads)

*We would appreciate open honesty about why so many teachers are leaving. School culture? Better opportunities elsewhere? Fed up with DoDEA system?*

**–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany**

*Should my child be ashamed of their whiteness like your diversity chief is promoting?*

**–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany**

*ALL your students should be celebrated. Not according to race or sexuality. DoDEA needs to get out of the business of promoting racism in any form including against whites. Content of Character. I think DoDEA is getting dangerously close to harming their non-minority students, causing them to be ashamed over who they are.*

**–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany**

*Stop the DEI nonsense and teach “real” academic curriculum. Many of the students are functional illiterates.*

**–Parent, Patch Middle School, Germany**

*I think you guys should stop pushing the LGBT agenda and the gender fluid nonsense, let the kids be kids!*

**–Parent, Vicenza Middle School, Italy**

*It does not please me to have a staff member with the preferred pronoun of Mixer. There are two sexes, plain and simple. Use the pronoun for what you are born with, or what you have transitioned to. Don’t confuse children who trust the “trusted” adults at school.*

**–Parent, Vicenza Middle School, Italy**

*You have major problems at this school that keep getting swept under the rug by the leadership. I have seen it first hand multiple times.*

**–Parent, Vicenza High School, Italy**

*Several good teachers have left the school and rumors are they were unhappy with the principle. All these issues are incredibly concerning particularly for a military community in which most students live turbulent lives. These kids deserve all the respect and support.*

**–Parent, Vicenza High School, Italy**

*A transgender student was bullying physically and verbally female students. The coach, vice principal and principal were informed and no disciplinary actions were taken with the student.*

**–Parent, Vicenza High School, Italy**

*Military children should be the focus as that is what DoDEA is created to serve but in this community they and their parents/sponsors are treated as the “intruders” since they/we are only here 2-3 years. The children of Teachers and District personnel are clearly favored in many areas, academically, athletically and in clubs. It’s a pity that the schools cannot grasp what it is like to be a military child and move so often and have a parent or both out in the field or deployed on a constant basis. There should be some kind of instruction to the teachers about this lifestyle and how they should be supportive and understanding of it.*

**–Parent, Vicenza High School, Italy**

*My experience is from the perspective of students who have special needs. When working with students of diverse backgrounds, seeking to be considerate of their unique challenges is essential. Some teachers do well in that regard but there does appear to be a culture that is unresponsive to this particular aspect of the student experience.*

**–Parent, Vicenza High School, Italy**

*There needs to be better consistency with administration. In the 4 years we have been at this school the MHS has had three different principals. It’s difficult for students staff and parents to have consistency and standards when there is constant change of leadership...After 4 years of service to this school I’m extremely disappointed at how poorly I was treated as an employee and a person.*

**–Parent/Employee, Rota Middle High School, Spain**

*I’ve heard that when administration becomes an issue they just move the problem from one area to another. After speaking with the OFT representative it would seem that [name redacted] was moved from DoDEA America to the European district because there were similar complaints regarding his comments about students and faculty.*

**–Parent, Rota Middle High School, Spain**

*Stop trying to change the way students speak by using certain pronouns and words that you have made up for the sake of inclusion and also stop pitting races against each other for your DEI initiatives.*

**–Parent, Rota Middle High School, Spain**

*Too many teachers bring politics into their lessons and expect children to answer in specific ways rather than teaching them how to critically think. There is also a good bit of wasted time during the day.*

**–Parent, Rota Middle High School, Spain**

*As a parent, I am appalled at the lack of transparency the school has had with promoting LGBTQ+ ideologies. When I addressed my concerns with the principal, she sent me to someone outside of the school that was no help at all. I want the issue addressed as to why it is ok for students to be exposed to teachers talking about their sex life. Straight teachers don't do that, why are the gay teachers? These children who come from military families already have enough stress they do not need more. The educator's name is [name redacted] she has spoken about her sexuality many times and even went so far as to introduce her wife to students and discuss the nature of their relationship. It is completely inappropriate and makes me have distrust with the school on not being more transparent about the programs they have at the school. It was obvious they were trying to hide the details of her "lessons" and the school proceeded to defend the teacher's actions.*

**–Parent, Rota Middle High School, Spain**

*Parents have no say in the curriculum or instruction. It is what big DoDEA decides. If parents had a say, there would be more focus on the basics rather than so much focus on Testing, Assessments, and scores. There would be more field trips so the kids have hands on learning rather than sitting at a computer. We are more focused on creating a "safe space" for the kids rather than encouraging their critical thinking skills. The curriculum focuses too much on reading comprehension rather than ensuring children have mastered the fundamentals in handwriting, spelling, sentence structure, and grammar.*

**–Parent, Rota Elementary School, Spain**

*Let's focus on academics and stop bombarding our children with psychological services at such a young age. Let them be kids and stop burdening them with the idea that something is always wrong.*

**–Parent, Rota Elementary School, Spain**

*Also the slow PCS of DoDEA teachers throughout the school year is pathetic. These students need to have their teachers there at the beginning of the term, not held up by slow HR movement that leads to long term subs who often do not have an understanding of the subject matter. There are teachers hired on last school year that missed all of 1st semester. If DoDEA HR is not getting it done, they should be removed and replaced with new blood that will.*

**–Parent, Bahrain Middle High School (aka Bahrain School), Bahrain**

*One of the teachers had an extreme focus on race. It entered many classroom discussions when it was unnecessary. It almost seemed like she was trying to pit black students against white students. For military kids who are used to mingling with each other and getting along as friends regardless of race or country of origin, this was highly inappropriate.*

**–Parent, Bahrain Middle High School, Bahrain**

*Feelings aside, what other option could there be? You are born a male or a female, that is it, there is no other option on the birth certificate. This is not a thing at other schools in the area and why we are considering PAYING to go elsewhere though we can go to this school for free.*

**–Parent, Bahrain Elementary School, Bahrain**

### **Additional, More Recent, Parent and Teacher Comments (2024/2025)**

Here is an additional sampling of parent and teacher comments made to Haywood after they read her articles about the school choice pilot for overseas schools, after publication of *DoD Schools Are a Potemkin Village*, and after she posted the 2023 Stakeholder Feedback Survey comments online for parents who had never seen them. (Note: These direct quotes from emails and direct messages contain typos.)

*As a parent, I find the communication from the administration at the school to be severely lacking. When you are a military family, your life is often chaotic, unpredictable and ever changing. It is difficult to then have the school your children attend follow the same suit. For example, just before school ended in 2023 the school sent out information that it will be changing some of the classrooms to 21st century classrooms with little to no explanation of what that is. As the school year started and we were navigating what it means to have a 21st century classroom, one of the teachers was not present and they had a substitute for the first few weeks of school. No explanation was provided, only word of mouth from other parents. I thought I was introducing myself to his teacher however, come to find out it's a substitute and we would have to start the process over when his teacher arrived a few weeks into the school year.*

–Parent, Bahrain School, May 2024, email

*At the Bahrain school subpar teachers, their coldness and dismissive are well known but I underestimated it until I experienced it as a parent as my interactions with staff members were negative and found them confrontational, childish and at times aggressive. Bahrain school children are ridiculed and verbally abused not only by teachers but by bus monitors and supporting staff, indicative of the permissive environment.*

*The option of bonuses. I couldn't imagine giving bonuses and raises to many of the teachers. Ive encountered several of them just taking advantage of the privilege of how difficult it is to get fired. The only solution is either let the children go to a better school like their state department peers or finally push DODEA out of Bahrain.*

*DODEA has had the benefit of having a rotating class body without sustained advocacy as parents move on to other duty stations. It's only after a few months there they realize the sub par education children are getting and the toxic environment their kids are left to suffer in.*

*There are countless families that choose private school or homeschool that are not being tracked at DODEA and NSA Bahrain for fear of the truth being unveiled.*

*Parents want school choice and it's only the mouth pieces of the teachers union that*

*has an agenda other than giving military children the best possible education in the most safe environment they can possibly have.*

*The Bahrain School's reputation has suffered massively within the country of Bahrain and hurt the US's reputation in the AOR.*

*For the purposes of making this letter succinct I've omitted countless concerns - from the 50 children classrooms, countless unqualified substitutes, to the abusive bus monitors, and inappropriate subjects being taught to the children.*

**–Parent, Bahrain School, June 2024, email**

*Yes, my youngest...was "too young" for evaluation even after her speech evaluation pointed towards SLD, she was mirror writing entire sentences, and her sister was found to be eligible for SLD. My oldest did get SLD eligibility and services at DoDEA after I had to fight for an evaluation. The reading specialist had NO training at all in identifying dyslexia and was supplementing with fountas & pinnell curriculum. She's attended 2 different DoDEA schools and teachers always said they had no concerns and "she's doing better than most." We got lucky that 1 special education teacher was putting herself through grad school to pay for dyslexia training bc we were on a small island with no other resources and thankfully we had orders.*

**–Parent, on experiences from Okinawa and Guam,  
January 2025, direct message**

*The mottos for this agency is "F up, move up."*

**–Teacher, Ft. Campbell, January 2025, direct message**

*With multiple moves...our first time living on post and DoDEA was the worst school system we have ever encountered for our special needs children. Like they're 30 years removed from equal access to education.*

**–Parent, Americas region, January 2025, direct message**

The same parent discussed how the DEC has become a dog-and-pony show for DoDEA administrators to show off to their bosses:

*Yes! They put on a whole show for garrison at our installation town halls. I can only imagine what they're doing in Congress.*

–Parent, Americas region, January 2025, direct message

*So many families are struggling with the dodea schools and being ignored. We just came from fort campbell and now at fort Novosel the schools are NOT allowing parent participation and honestly not even acting like they even care about our families. Reminds me of FCPS [Fairfax County Public Schools].*

–Parent, Fort Novosel, January 2025, direct message

*I recently read your article titled "DoD Schools Are a Potemkin Village." It is very insightful and has given me some sort of comfort that I'm not alone in the challenges I'm facing with DODEA. I wanted to share my current struggle so you have another parental testimony on the failings of this school system.*

–Parent sharing about an unresolved bus incident and DoDEA retaliation, Germany, December 2024, email

*Thank you for your article today. I have three in DODEA in Stuttgart and it's been a shitshow. It's complicated as to why it's so bad and I really appreciate your writing this to help explain the issues to people (even those with kids in the system)...People get tired of fighting when nothing ever changes and so much is still on their plates. I was under the mistaken notion that DODEA was the gold standard when we moved here. Not so much. The toxic administrators being retained and shuffled around is the worst. I have to assume eventually it affects military recruiting and retention. Thank you again. And tell your friend there are great families and children here but they are succeeding in spite of the district and schools not because of them.*

–Parent, Germany, September 2024, direct message

*We read your article dated on September 18 DoD Schools Are a Potemkin Village. We unfortunately have the same experiences to share from our time at West Point. Both of us sat on the school board and tried to do a survey to share with the Dodea superintendent. We successfully did a survey and gave that data to share. We collected statements from parents, or “stakeholders” telling their stories of unprofessional behavior of leadership and staff. We have kept all these documents.*

*We tried for years to get changes but like your article mentioned no one was ever fired but just shuffled to a different position. No real changes were ever made. If we can help in your efforts to get things changed, please reach back out.*

*Thank you for being in the fight to better our children’s educational experience!*

*Wish we’d known you were out there fighting...”*

**–Former Parents (now retired military),  
West Point, September 2024, email**

*For the first 2 of those years, I performed duties in the USAFE assignments division of the Personnel directorate. I was a bit of a fish out of water, as I was an air crew specialty, in a three story building filled of personnelists. Included in that group were the DODDS liaison office.*

*We had three kids at various stages of the DODDS system, so we saw and experienced some good, but an awful lot of self-serving policies and procedures that were intended to marginalize parental involvement, and underserved the students. I also had the opportunity to witness the HQ activity that was focused on baffling the 4-star general with BS, all to not be held accountable.*

*I enjoyed reading a few of your articles, as you most certainly capture the DODDS shenanigans and more.*

**–Retired military, Parent in Germany  
1999-2003, January 2025, email**

*...After having just finished a productive 3-year term on the DODEA Fort Knox “School Board” and then seeing all the great administrators swept away like the plague this fall I was ready to cry. Something was wrong yet I couldn’t place it. The new admins had suddenly shut me and the rest of the outgoing board members out and let us be the “fall guys” (along with the old admins) for everything “wrong” at our schools. I’ve been on Fort Knox for nearly 7 years and our schools had never been better. Not perfect (we had a long ways to go) but we were finally making progress with improved programs, increased parental voice and dialogue, and a sense of community. Suddenly [name of superintendent] swept house...and it feels*

*like everything was back to seven years ago again. I couldn't place it until I read your Potemkin Village article. YES! That's exactly what I believe is happening, even here in CONUS at Fort Knox, KY. I'm out of my school board position as of yesterday, but would like to know what your next steps are and how I might help support your work. Thank you for shedding light on so many issues I've been fighting here for so long (the lack of parental access to children's med records is another). It's a breath of fresh air to see that people are noticing that things are very wrong. If you have a moment to point me in a direction that might be beneficial to your cause.*

**–Parent, Ft. Knox, September 2024, email**

*I just would love to get the WP data if/when you get it. Our new principal was from WP last year. Staff are being bullied and threatened into not filing ICE comments. We have been told we are not to speak badly about the school in any way, even to our spouses. I'm interested if there were similar issues at WP last year.*

**–Teacher, Ft. Knox, January 2025, direct message**

*It is not easy for us, the spouses, to get into DoDEA. We are seen as outsiders.*

*...I don't know how they allowed a school to go through the accreditation when they were not fully staffed.*

*...Congress should have a public hearing and call us to testify. They need to listen to all the people that had been struggling with these issues now for years.*

*The biggest problem in DoDEA is the union, and trust me I do support workers unions but not this type of union that makes it easy for lazy teachers not to do their job.*

*When they hire as the spouse as teachers, they don't treat us as professionals like the stateside teachers. They give us contracts similar with the non-professional jobs, such as the secretary, attendance clerk. They give us temporary jobs, though we have to go through the same hiring process, EAS. We have to qualify for the job, just like the stateside teachers. They said that we have priority for hiring that is why we like local hires, get fired first if the school has less students and need to relocate, excess teachers. We the spouses are sent home, the teacher hired from the states going to other schools.*

**– Parent/Teacher, Europe South, May 2024 and July 2024, email**

*We got laughed at by the staff here when we told them about the school we came from in nyc. Integrated Co-teaching classroom -before and after school reading and math groups -after school programs like art, dance, sports -4 parent-teacher conferences each year. They would be as late as 7 PM to accommodate working parents. We've had staff get up and walk out of IEP meetings bc it's after 2:45 PM.*

**–Parent, Europe Central, January 2025, direct message**

*I have three kids. My first one, she went to a DoDEA school in Naples, Italy, and they were AWFUL to deal with my daughter. They didn't even tell me there were 504, IEP options for her when she was diagnosed with PTSD and anxiety among other things. They made it really difficult for my daughter from 2nd and 3rd grades. Her 3rd grade teacher caused ALL of the kids extensive stress and anxiety before their version of standardized testing and made it seem like they (the students) were going to be in trouble or have a harder time in her class if they didn't do well like she expected. I took my daughter stateside for part of 3rd grade while my husband was deployed because they made things so stressful for her and wouldn't accommodate anything.*

**–Parent, speaking of her family's experience in Italy, January 2025, direct message**

*We just went through months of grueling issues with dodea and due process. In the end we dropped our case and just homeschooled. They will not come to mediation. They will not come to resolution sessions. They will waste time as you and your attorneys develop documents to agree to, costing you. They will schedule meetings then not come, this was true of the DoDEA and DoD Hearing and Appeals attorney, their own DoDEA attorneys and legal aids all on both sides all paid by your tax dollars while you get NO SUPPORT FROM JAG. They will try to bankrupt you. Doesn't matter how good the attorney is if you don't have 100k and the attorneys that take contingency cases have years of a wait list.*

**–Parent, Korea, January 2025, Facebook**

*Impacts of COVID notwithstanding, the experience throughout the school year was appallingly disordered, confusing, and mismanaged. For instance, in just nine school months our 1st grade child had four different teachers and three different principals. This was our first experience with a DODEA school and we were so greatly dissatisfied that we have since disenrolled our elementary children and, at a significant financial burden, chosen a private school for this school year. Our kids are thriving in their new environment but it will still take a significant amount of time to recover from the negative effects of that chaotic school environment.*

*Even more concerning is the fact that what we encountered was far from an isolated experience. Based on our experience and in conversation with other parents, the overwhelming consensus is that there are unmistakable and alarming problems occurring not only at [name of elementary school] but across all of DODEA.”*

**–Parent, Americas region, April 2025, email**

*...I wanted to let you know about the outcome of elevating the Accelerated Withdrawal issue through the advisory committees. We elevated it through the DAC and created a template of a new policy that would better meet the needs of the community. We were informed at our last SAC meeting that the agenda item won't even be discussed at the RAC because it was decided it was "an issue that could be handled by local administration." This is obviously not the case. We were also told that AW complaints only happen in [name of country]. It's incredibly frustrating. It reinforces the feelings of powerlessness. Especially since the SAC is the closest thing we have in DODEA to a board.*

**–Parent, Pacific region, May 2025, email**

*I stopped taking my 8th grade ELA students to our DoDEA school library 3 years ago after many of them found and opened books that seemed totally scientific and educational, but they contained graphic, explicit porn. My students were horrified and confused.*

**–Teacher, Germany, May 2025, X comment**

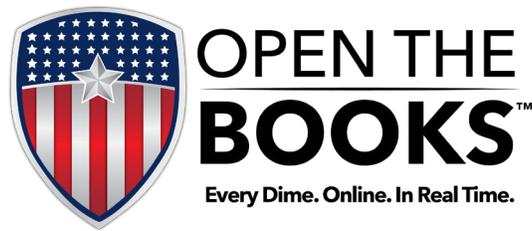
*I would like to share my experiences with the Universal Pre-Kindergarten situation at [name of base in Americas region] and assuming similar for other Pre-Kindergarten classes across DoDEA. It is really bad. The Universal Pre-Kindergarten program at [name of base] faces several systemic challenges that impact both educators, parents and students. Key concerns include:*

- **Classroom Composition:** *Large class sizes (20-25 students) include a mix of regular education students, children with special needs, and non-English-speaking students. This diversity, while beneficial in theory, creates difficulties in individualized instruction and classroom management....*
- **Staffing Issues:** *A single teacher and one educational aide are responsible for all aspects of classroom operations, including instruction, safety, and toileting duties (DoDEA does not require students to be toilet/potty trained). Frequent substitutions of Aides and inconsistent staffing disrupt student routines, particularly for special needs students who require stability....The ratio of 1 teacher, 1 Aide because of the behaviors of the students turns the classroom aide into a one-to-one and leaves the teacher without a classroom aide. Example, special needs students who are runners, screamers, biters, hitters, throwers (throwing class items such as building blocks, etc.), and/or special needs students putting objects in their mouth require close supervision. Teachers are required, as a "shared responsibility" and also the person responsible for the class, to support the aide while simultaneously teaching and follow the curriculum with fidelity....*
- **Safety and Liability Risks:** *The requirement for teacher and aide to handle toileting duties (5-25 minutes, and sometimes over 45 minutes if the child on an hourly IEP toileting schedule refuses) introduces liability concerns and detracts from instructional time. Again, overall responsibility falls on the teacher. Additionally, the lack of one-on-one aides for special needs students increases safety risks. The one Aide often has to act as a one-to-one for safety purposes, leaving the teacher unsupported.*
- **Administrative Policies:** *DoDEA administrators maintain current staffing and classroom policies despite clear challenges. The burden of managing these difficulties falls on educators and parents, rather than on those responsible for policy decisions-DoDEA School Administrators and DoDEA Leaders.*

*These issues highlight broader concerns within DoDEA schools regarding resource allocation, staffing policies, and the need for structured intervention to ensure a safe and effective learning environment without placing accountability and blame solely on the educators and parents. Zero School Administrator accountability.*

*–Teacher, Americas region, May 2025, email*

## ABOUT AMERICAN TRANSPARENCY



### AS FEATURED IN:

**C-SPAN** *Chicago Tribune* *The New York Times*

**Forbes** **BBC** **npr** **RealClear** Politics **USA TODAY**



**10 BILLION** rows of data.

**1.1 BILLION** government expenditures.

**172 MILLION** public pensions and salaries.

**110,000** government agencies.

**350,000** open records requests...

**AND COUNTING.**

## Open the Books is the largest private database of public spending in history.

### IN 2023 AND 2024...

Quantified the federal bureaucracy and the waste, fraud and abuse that followed Covid lockdowns. We also exposed the radical DEI ideology that had permeated the Department of Defense, National Science Foundation and the EPA.

### IN 2021 AND 2022...

Identified Dr. Anthony Fauci as the top paid federal employee, quantified the staggering cost of U.S. military gear left behind in Afghanistan, cracked open California's state checkbook and Big Pharma's \$1.4 billion in third-party paid royalties—leading to four televised congressional hearings in 2022.

### IN 2020...

*The President's Budget To Congress FY 2021* included a first-ever chapter, "Stopping Wasteful and Unnecessary Spending," which was inspired by our oversight report, *Where's The Pork? A Study of \$600 Billion In Federal Grants*. Included in the President's Budget was our report, *Use-It-Or-Lose-It - How The Federal Government Spent \$97 Billion In September 2018*.

### IN 2019...

Our Top 82 U.S. Non-Profit Hospitals: Quantifying Government Payments & Financial Assets report launched on *FOX News' Tucker Carlson Tonight* and *USA TODAY*. This report backstopped President Trump's two executive orders on healthcare price transparency by showing that wealthy charitable non-profit healthcare providers and their CEO's were making big profits. Colorado Governor Jared Polis (D) also cited this data in his state of the state address while arguing for price reforms.

### IN 2018...

Open The Books' Mapping The Swamp, A Study Of The Administrative State Media report launched on *FOX News' The Ingraham Angle* and directly led to Representative Judy Hice's (R-GA) legislation on pension and bonus transparency (H.R. 2612). Furthermore, we briefed the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management & Budget regarding our policy ideas to drain the swamp.

### IN 2017...

The Tax Cuts And Jobs Act 2017, passed into law and included a claw-back tax on Ivy League-style, excessive university endowments. The *Boston Globe* cited our Ivy League, Inc. oversight report as a catalyst for the legislative provision. Coverage included *The Wall Street Journal* and eight segments on *Fox New*

## IN RECOGNITION OF OUR TEAM



**JOHN HART**

Chief Executive Officer



**Craig Mijares**

Executive Chairman



**Christopher Neefus**

Vice President,  
Communications



**Courtenay Lyons**

Development Director



**Tamara Colbert**

Public Relations  
Specialist



**Rachel O'Brien**

Deputy  
Public Policy Editor



**Amber Todoroff**

Deputy  
Public Policy Editor



**Jeremy Portnoy**

Investigative  
Journalist

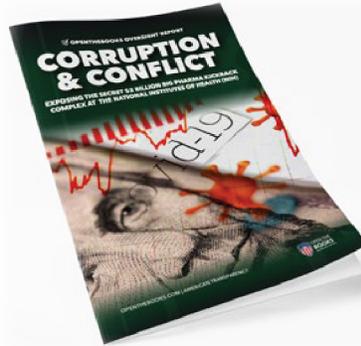


## PREVIOUS OVERSIGHT

AVAILABLE AT [OPENTHEBOOKS.COM](https://openthebooks.com)



**STATE OF THE STATE SCHOOLS**



**CORRUPTION & CONFLICT**



**DUPLICATION NATION**



**SCHOOLS FOR RADICALS**



**THE COVID AID WASTE COMPENDIUM**



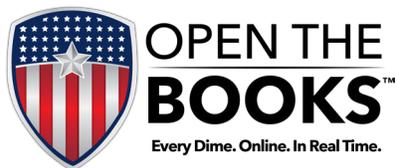
**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**



# IT'S YOUR MONEY!

Join the  
Transparency  
Revolution

SCAN TO DONATE



© 2026 OpentheBooks.com

A project of American Transparency 501(c)(3) All Rights Reserved  
2518 Burnsed Blvd #609 | The Villages, FL 32163