

Communication PRinciples for Principals

JANUARY 2010

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING



TIPS

DoDEA Regulation 7350.1, Manpower Management Program, June 1, 2004, outlines policies affecting manpower usage in DoDEA.

Staffing Standards for SY 09-10 can be found at <http://www.dodea.edu/offices/fiscal/staffing.cfm?sid=2>.

Resource Management and the DoDEA Staffing Process

As the resource managers for schools, principals have a critical responsibility to find ways to best utilize the resources that are allocated to them to achieve the mission. It is not as easy task. Resources have limits and DoDEA must operate within the allocations issued by the Department of Defense.

DoDEA schools must be staffed appropriately to ensure that the mission is accomplished in an efficient and responsible manner. Staffing is part of a larger process of resource allocation and management. Staffing can be an emotionally charged issue because it affects people and jobs. This tip sheet takes a look at the staffing process to help principals better understand the issues involved.

Many factors are considered in determining staffing requirements to support educational programs to meet the needs of DoDEA students. These factors are part of a process used to determine staffing structures at every level of the DoDEA School System. Two chief factors drive all of the resources that DoDEA receives to accomplish the mission – budget and manpower authorizations. Both of these elements are provided to DoDEA through the Secretary of Defense.

Student enrollments drive the budget and manpower decisions made by DoD and DoDEA. We use the 30 September enrollments as the benchmark to budget and staff schools for the coming school year.

Budget

DoDEA currently manages \$1.8 billion to operate our school system. Accountability is paramount. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, we began a process for prioritizing mission requirements and allocating limited discretionary funds. Managers from every level of DoDEA participated in that process. As a result we are able to efficiently and effectively manage funds. This budget process has continued for FY 2010. Many of our facilities are in need of improvement and in some cases, replacement. We have worked with the Pentagon to get additional funds for facility improvements during FY 2010-15.



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Manpower

Manpower resources from DoD are distributed in an equitable and efficient manner to support students and approved educational programs. Our organizational structure and assigned functional responsibilities determine the use of DoDEA manpower. The priority for DoDEA manpower resources is school level requirements. All manpower positions are structured to provide an optimum balance between program needs, economy, efficiency of operations, and effective use of human resources.

As a school system and a DoD Field Activity, we cannot exceed the established ceilings or other manpower limitations provided by DoD. Manpower policies and procedures are designed to retain flexibility to respond to changes in educational program requirements, military stationing decisions, technological advances, changes in resource levels, and environmental factors.

Manpower allocations are provided in Full-time Equivalent (FTE) work years. For civilian employees, an FTE work year is the total number of regular straight-time hours (not including overtime, Sunday premium, or holiday premium) worked by an employee, divided by the number of compensable hours applicable to each fiscal year (approximately 260 workdays or 2,087 hours). DoDEA is authorized 12,693 FTEs for SY 2010-11.

Staffing Standards

DoDEA also uses staffing standards to calculate estimated staffing requirements. Staffing standards are subject to periodic review and revision, based on DoDEA experience, comparison to U.S. public school systems, shifts in educational priorities, and pertinent educational research. The Director, DoDEA establishes the primary staffing guidance. The Education Directorate and the Management Analysis Branch initiate changes, conduct reviews, and coordinate approval. The current process of reviewing staffing across the board will be reviewed by the DoDEA Staffing and Scheduling Task Force that has been established as part of the program evaluation process when they meet this coming spring.

Each year in December, DoDEA reviews teaching positions and other staffing allocations. Based on projected enrollments, budget allocations, and projected FTEs, DoDEA Headquarters (HQ) develops an initial staffing plan for the coming school year. The plan may include changes in the staffing guideline to reflect new priorities or factors that must be taken into consideration. The initial projections are then sent to area leadership and district superintendents for review and input.

Goal 2 of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) requires DoDEA to use performance-driven management systems that operate in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner; place resource allocation and decision-making at the lowest operational level; and facilitate a safe environment conducive to optimum student achievement.



District superintendents carefully review the projected staffing. They may consult with principals on special circumstances or situations. They conduct an analysis of the impact of the proposed standards and then submit, through the Areas, any unique situations or circumstances (reclamas) that would require a change in the proposed staffing for each school.

Headquarters works with superintendents and Area offices to review the reclamas and make adjustments as needed. Then a second set of planning vouchers are issued to superintendents and principals. That begins a school level process where principals, who are the resource managers for their schools, examine ways in which they can best utilize the resources, human and otherwise, allotted for the coming school year.

It's a Fluid Process

The staffing process is a fluid and ongoing one, and doesn't end with the issuance of the manpower vouchers. Because of the unpredictability of enrollment patterns, DoDEA addresses unexpected growth or programming changes that would require additional resources throughout the year. DoDEA maintains a continuous coordination and communication throughout the year between principals, superintendents, Area, and Headquarters staffs to ensure that schools are properly staffed to deliver the best educational experience possible for all DoDEA students as well as ensure highest student achievement.

What can principals do?

Be realistic. DoDEA has been a well-resourced school system. We have been fortunate in past years to have adequate manpower and funding for both operational expenses and educational initiatives. Our current situation is far better than many school districts across the United States who are struggling with limited tax dollars and positions to support public education.

Keep the initial planning and analysis in management circles. There is nothing gained by getting teachers, parents, and commanders charged up about planning scenarios that may never pan out. As you might expect, any reductions quickly attract the attention of our publics and the commands. More often than not, the commands want to help by providing feedback up the DoD chain about the impact. It is important that we let our HQ work these issues without having to stop and respond to a barrage of inquires from the DoD chain. Principals can assist us by

responding through the DoDEA chain of command to requests for information regarding any impact of manpower fluctuations and reductions. Discussions between major commands and DoDEA are appropriate for the area and HQ levels, not the school or district levels.

Remember that the process is ongoing. Since the enrollments are projected enrollments, DoDEA must address unforeseen enrollments growth or other circumstances throughout the year. In doing so, every position is subject to review and scrutiny.

Remember that staffing decisions are also impacted by military force stationing decisions. The size of military communities fluctuates and is dependent on decisions made by military leaders. Smaller military communities mean smaller schools and less staffing. Larger military communities require bigger schools and more staffing.

The manpower review does not impact most programs implemented in recent years to improve educational programs. Programs such as full day kindergarten, reduced PTR, increased guidance and counseling services, additional school psychologists, and gifted education teachers, curriculum development, and curriculum adoptions remain.

Talk to employees, parents, and communities about the manpower issues when asked. Assure them we are doing our best to address any issues and to minimize the impact. Remind them that these are difficult times financially and like every school district, we have to learn to work and operate efficiently and to maximize the resources that we currently have. Inform them with confidence that DoDEA will employ a common sense approach to any manpower allocations and make adjustments that will least affect students and learning. DoDEA is not alone in facing manpower and budget issues related to funding public education. A quick review of the national media shows that virtually every state is dealing with reduced budgets and funding for schools. Our guiding principles have always been to do our best for all students, believe in and support our school family, and be proud of our accomplishments.

Should you have questions about how to address manpower issues, please call your District Superintendent or Area Office leadership.