



OFT/DoDEA Tentative Agreement (TA) for a Successor Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is collective bargaining?

Collective bargaining is the process, governed by federal law, by which employees have the opportunity, acting together through their union, to exercise their collective power and sit down as equals with management at a bargaining table to negotiate over certain terms and conditions of employment. Our union, the OFT, is the exclusive representative of all educators in the Europe South District and we bargain with DoDEA management over terms and conditions for our district only. Both parties are required to bargain in good faith in order to reach a collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

What is a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and why will there be a new one for OFT and the Europe South District?

A collective bargaining agreement (known as a CBA and often referred to as a union contract) is a legally binding written agreement between management and a group of employees taking action together as a union. It governs certain terms and conditions of employment for members of the bargaining unit. Our current CBA was signed in 1994 and has been in effect for the past 28 years. In November 2019, DoDEA management, in an effort to implement three anti-union executive orders issued by former President Trump, opened our 28-year old contract. DoDEA's original proposals for a new contract also included regressive measures and takebacks, such as an 8 ½ hr duty day (without additional pay), slashing duty-free lunch time, and cuts to "official time" and other important contractual provisions. OFT members, acting in solidarity, fought back against these proposals, all of which were eventually rescinded by our employer due to the pressure and activism you demonstrated over the last several months. Our voice has been heard and the OFT Bargaining Team has been able to advance proposals at the table that have resulted in a Tentative Agreement containing significant improvements over the status quo.

Who are the members of the OFT Bargaining Team?

The OFT Bargaining Team consists of a group of dedicated DoDEA teachers and OFT members from around the Europe South District who have represented our interests in collective bargaining with our employer. They are:

Linda Hogan, President (Ankara Unit School)
Colleen Badidis, Vice President (Naples ES)

Mary Chambers, Secretary & LUR (Rota ES)

Cathy Indresano, ExComm Member & Alt-LUR (Sigonella ES)

Tracy Rowe, ExComm Member (Bahrain ES)

Debbie Pionk, LUR (Aviano ES) (Alternate Team Member)

Marie Sainz-Funaro, Treasurer & President *Emerita* (Livorno Unit School) (Observer)

What is a Tentative Agreement (TA)?

A Tentative Agreement (TA) is a contract provision that the union and management bargaining teams have provisionally agreed upon, pending ratification by the union and approval by the Agency Head. Since we have a TA on all open articles, OFT and DoDEA management have what's known as a "full TA", meaning a tentative agreement on the entire successor collective bargaining agreement (CBA). OFT members now have the chance to democratically decide to approve the TA in a contract ratification vote.

What is a contract ratification vote?

A contract ratification vote is when the members of a union democratically determine whether or not to accept the terms of a new CBA that have been tentatively agreed upon by the union's bargaining team and the employer. Only union members have a right to vote on the TA and a simple majority of those voting determines the outcome of the vote.

Why does the OFT Bargaining Team recommend a "Yes" vote on the Tentative Agreement (TA)?

This TA includes major improvements over our last CBA, all while protecting nearly all the contract provisions we've depended on to best serve our students and protect our profession. Perhaps most importantly, this contract is a tool we can use together to build power to advocate even more effectively for the kind of work environment we can be proud of when we go home each day. And, when you consider that the best possible outcome just a couple of months ago was to allow a third party to decide the final terms of our contract, it is extraordinary that we now have a full TA to ratify. Extraordinary, but not lucky. This TA is wholly a product of our collective action and working in close coordination with our national partner, the AFT. It is the very best agreement possible because we together earned it.

Where can I find a summary of the Tentative Agreement?

A summary of the Tentative Agreement will be e-mailed to all OFT members. You may obtain a copy from your LUR and access will soon be available on the OFT's website at: overseas.aft.org.

How can I read a copy of the full Tentative Agreement?

A full copy of the Tentative Agreement (TA) will be e-mailed to all OFT members in advance of the contract ratification vote. Members will also be sent a summary of the highlights of the TA. If you have additional questions about obtaining a complete copy of the TA, please contact your LUR.

Why doesn't the Tentative Agreement address...?

Collective bargaining is a process in which our union bargaining team has the opportunity to negotiate with management representatives over certain subjects related to our terms and conditions of employment. The entire process is governed by federal law and the question of which subjects are legally negotiable and which are not is often technically complex. Our OFT Bargaining Team advanced proposals at the bargaining table that, based on member surveys and discussions, they believed were in the best interests of OFT members and the kids and military-connected families we all serve. If you have a question about whether a particular subject is covered in the TA and if not, why not, you may direct that question to your LUR or ask your bargaining team during one of the scheduled contract informational meetings.

How does the Tentative Agreement address a transfer program?

Legally, we cannot force DoDEA to reimplement its Worldwide Transfer Program or some other transfer program, but should they do so, OFT has secured the right in the Tentative Agreement to bargain over the implementation of that program. We cannot, and would not want to, bargain over terms and conditions of employment for DoDEA employees in other districts and no organization other than OFT can bargain over such terms and conditions for Europe South teachers. As transfer is a subject that, by its very nature, involves terms and conditions in multiple districts, it presents a challenge in contract negotiations. Having said that, OFT is interested in addressing members' concerns about this important issue going forward.

What will the Tentative Agreement mean for the length of the duty day at my school?

The duty day will remain the same as it has been at all Europe South District schools for 4 out of 5 days of the workweek. The current (1994) collective bargaining agreement (CBA) provides that the duty day begins not earlier than 20 minutes before the instructional day and ends no later than 30 minutes after the instructional day. This remains the general rule for 4/5 of our workdays. One day per week, which may be a different day at each school, will be extended by 30 minutes and the last hour of that duty day, beginning at the completion of school dismissal, will be management-directed time. Management has not yet provided any additional information as to what that hour will be used for, it may vary at different schools, or it may not be utilized at all. As the new CBA is implemented, we will discuss with principals at every school, as well as district leadership, their plans for this time. Most importantly, we know how that time could best be used to serve our students, and as this contract is implemented, we together must advocate for how that hour should be spent.

Will there be a change to the length of my duty-free lunch?

Upon member ratification of the Tentative Agreement, there will be a consistent 45-minute duty-free lunch time across all Europe South District schools. The majority of our schools will maintain the same 45-minute duty-free lunch time they currently have. A small number of

schools will have a modest increase of duty-free lunch time and a few schools will experience a decrease from what they currently have.

Does the Tentative Agreement contain gains for the teachers in the Europe South District?

Absolutely. There are many gains and additional benefits for Europe South educators in and connected to the Tentative Agreement (TA). A few highlights include:

- We will now receive a \$1500 stipend upon completion of our six credits for DoDEA recertification.
- For the first time in any DoDDS school, there will be guaranteed preparation time written into the language of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA or contract). The amount of prep will not change significantly from current practice for most of our schools, though a few elementary schools may see a decrease of approximately 5 minutes to bring them in line with the rest of the district. Ultimately, the fact that prep time is now written into the CBA, means it cannot be taken away during the life of the contract.
- Assigned work time beyond the duty day, as defined in the TA, must be paid accordingly.
- All educators in the Europe South District will receive a \$500 signing bonus within thirty days of implementation of the CBA.
- We have secured brand new language members can utilize to advocate on behalf of themselves and the kids we serve such as: a commitment by management to treat educators with respect and professionalism; a shared commitment by OFT and DoDEA to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Europe South District; strong language prohibiting workplace bullying; and a commitment by DoDEA management to make good faith efforts to ensure schools are ready for students in the fall.

...and MORE!

Please see your copy of the Summary of OFT/DoDEA Tentative Agreement and the full Tentative Agreement (TA) for more complete information.

What does the contract signing bonus Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) mean?

Our union negotiated for a \$500 signing bonus to be paid by DoDEA to all Europe South educators upon implementation of our new collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The bonus will be paid in the form of a \$500 stipend within 30 days of the date of contract implementation. This is a common practice in contracts the AFT helps to negotiate.

Once approved by the OFT membership, when will the terms of the Tentative Agreement go into effect?

After the OFT membership approves the Tentative Agreement (TA), it must go through a process known as Agency Head Review before a DoD component, the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS). The Agency Head Review process takes 30 days. Assuming the TA is approved by DCPAS, the new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) will be implemented on August 1, 2023.

When will our new collective bargaining agreement expire?

The initial term of the new collective bargaining agreement (CBA or contract) will expire on 31 December 2028 at 23:59 Central European Time. This means that all of the benefits, rules, and guarantees that OFT fought for over the last three years will be secure until then. After 2028, the contract will roll over on a year-to-year basis unless either party chooses to renegotiate it after 2028.

Do I need to be an OFT member to vote on the Tentative Agreement?

Yes! Among the many benefits of OFT membership is the right to vote on the Tentative Agreement (TA). Anyone who submits a signed membership form before the end of the contract ratification vote, will have a chance to vote. If you've ever asked why being a member makes a difference, our fight over the past 3 years should give you that answer. Without a large, highly active membership, we would never have been able to fight off a coordinated attack on our profession, nor make the big gains we secured in this TA. Every organization needs two things: active members and resources. By becoming a member, you show DoDEA and your colleagues what you value and you help ensure that our children will learn in the best possible environment with educators who have the tools, time, and trust to do what's right for our students. Join us today to make us stronger.

How long is the vote open and how will we be notified of the results?

The contract ratification vote will open Wednesday, November 16, 2022 and will close Sunday, November 27, 2022. Members will be notified via e-mail and on the website of the results on Monday, November 28, 2022.

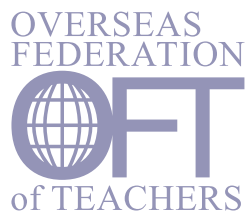
How can I cast my vote for the Tentative Agreement?

If you are an OFT member, on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, you will receive an email sent to your non-DoDEA email address on file with OFT. If OFT does not have your current non-work email address, please send it to Colleen Badidis at cbadidis@gmail.com as soon as possible to ensure you receive a ballot. This email will contain a link to your ballot for contract ratification. Every member gets one vote. Once you vote, the link you received will no longer be active. You must cast your vote on or before Sunday, November 27, 2022, for your vote to count. If you have any issues voting, please contact your LUR.

BOTTOM LINE: Why should I vote Yes! in the contract ratification vote?

The Tentative Agreement includes significant improvements to the existing contract, which only go into effect if members vote Yes! in the contract ratification vote. A supermajority in favor of ratification of the Tentative Agreement enables us to continue to organize, build collective power, and fight for what is good for kids and fair to teachers. And once we ratify this TA, only we can enforce it by knowing what's in it, sharing what's happening in our schools, and standing together to ensure each article is adhered to on behalf of our children and profession. Make your voice heard. Join us in voting Yes!

OFT will schedule membership meetings to answer questions and hear comments about the Tentative Agreement. For additional information, contact your Local Union Representative (LUR), check your e-mail, and visit the OFT website at: overseas.aft.org



Overseas Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO
OFT Wants What's Good for Kids and Fair to Teachers.