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NAFIS Board Announces New Executive Director

Washington, DC – April 6, 2022 – The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Nicole Russell has been named the next NAFIS Executive Director. Her first day will be May 2, 2022. Interim Executive Director John Forkenbrock will support her transition in the coming months.

Russell has 14 years of Capitol Hill, federal lobbying, corporate communications and nonprofit experience in government relations, specializing in education policy. Most recently, she served as the Government Relations Deputy Director at the National Military Family Association, where her policy portfolio included K-12 education and childcare. She was elected co-chair of the Military Coalition's Personnel Committee in 2021, which maintains Impact Aid funding as a top legislative policy goal. She also served as an ex-officio member of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission 2020-2022.



"After an extensive search, the Board unanimously chose Ms. Russell to lead NAFIS into its next chapter," said NAFIS Board President Tom Schneider. "We are excited to welcome her as NAFIS Executive Director, and we have complete confidence in her ability to move NAFIS forward while continuing our high standard of member service and advocacy on Capitol Hill.

"I am honored to join the NAFIS family and lead this esteemed organization, and I am dedicated to making it stronger and more unified than ever. We will continue our hard work to ensure federally connected students have equal access to the educational opportunities they deserve," said Russell. "I look forward to bringing my experience and passion to the organization and to developing partnerships with school districts across the United States. Together, we will strengthen Impact Aid, ensuring education equity for our students."

Russell started her career in government relations as a federal lobbyist representing cities, counties and school districts across the United States. She then transitioned to the corporate world, supporting global corporate strategy through public affairs, corporate social responsibility and strategic partnerships for a Fortune 300 media company.

An active-duty Marine spouse, Russell has served in leadership roles for several military nonprofit organizations in Washington, DC and Okinawa, Japan. She holds a Master's Degree in International Commerce and Policy from George Mason University and received her Bachelor of Arts in Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs from Miami University in Ohio.

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The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) represents the 1,100-plus federally impacted public school districts that together educate more than 10 million students across the nation. Federally impacted school districts are those located on or near nontaxable Federal property—including military installations; Indian Trust, Treaty and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; Federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, national laboratories and other Federal buildings and property. These school districts, which are demographically and geographically diverse, receive Impact Aid, a Federal education program that reimburses school districts for the lost local revenue and additional costs associated with the presence of Federal property. To learn more, visit <https://www.nafisd.org/>.