



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Aug 17, 2023
Smart Brevity® count: 5.5 mins...1461 words

Volume 42, Number 1

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President's Welcome

Most students experience a few butterflies the first week of school. "Who will be in my class?", "What should I wear?", and "Where will I sit?" are just a few questions that I heard my own children ask this week.

As a teacher, I am no exception. The first day of school left me with butterflies every time. Even after all those years, I still barely slept the night before my students arrived, and I worried how well that first day would go. I suspect that many of you experienced something similar this morning. It's because we care. We want everything to go just right—and I hope it did for you today.

The school year has a life cycle much like that of a butterfly. We mark our students' growth alongside the milestones on the school calendar — end of quarter, winter break, spring break. We nurture the students in our care and watch them transform and grow and wait for the moment that they are able to use their wings to take flight. And, in the process, we grow with them. They share their passions with us. They tell us stories about their weekend adventures and, too often, their hardships. Sometimes they ask questions that we have to research together, and we grow into a learning community. A kind of family. As Maya Angelou put it, "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

Beyond your classrooms, I hope that you too find growth opportunities. Find ways to support one another in your buildings. Ask for a mentor. Visit a colleague's classroom. Coteach a lesson with a librarian. Work in concert with our classified staff and administrators. Get involved in our local communities.

So, as you begin your school year, I wish you the very best and encourage you to embrace your own personal growth.

Bargaining Update

Thank you for your engagement and activism. Together we can do great things for our members, students, and schools. As a result of our collective efforts — picketing, postcards, emails, testimony, and bargaining support — our new superintendent, Dr. Luke Meinert, encouraged the District's bargaining team back to the table.

The teams bargained on July 10th and 11th and tentatively agreed to eight articles. Following Governor Dunleavy's veto of education funding and the Borough's additional allocation of \$4 million dollars, both teams knew the lay of the financial landscape. Bargaining continued on August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd on the remaining twelve articles, including the big money ones. After 20 long months, on August 4th a tentative agreement was finally reached.

Meetings were held on August 9th and 14th to provide information and answer questions about the Tentative Agreement. Additional information can be obtained at our joint FEA/ESSA BBQ on August 25th at Pioneer Park.

The vote on ratification of the Tentative Agreement will take place on Thursday, August 31st at North Pole High School auditorium from 4:30-6:30pm. Voting is open to FEA members only. If you are not a member yet and want to join, please call FEA at 907-456-4435 or [visit NEA-Alaska's website to join online.](#)

Bargaining Members

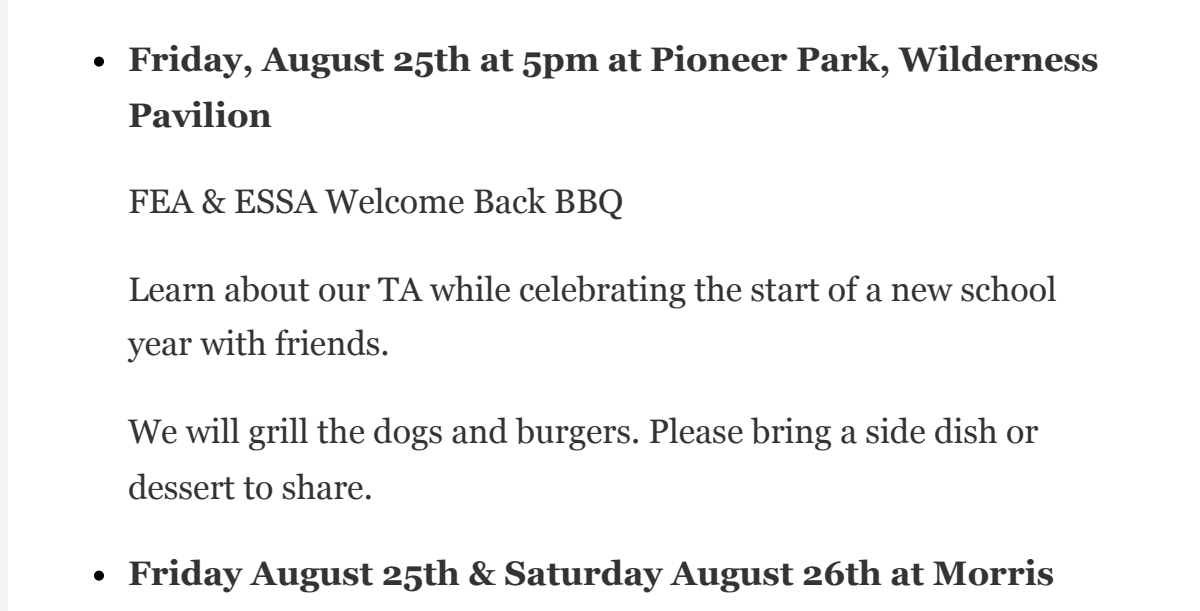
I cannot thank the bargaining team enough for their service. Their work is a true labor of love. They each volunteered 400+ hours to the process and they maintained professionalism and dedication throughout. They fought to get FEA members the best deal that they could, both financially and with language to address member concerns. I also want to thank the families of the bargaining team members. As a past member of this team, I can tell you that their families made sacrifices while they served to bargain on behalf of all of us.

- Coby Haas - Spokesperson, Tanana MS
- Paula Addis - Pearl Creek
- Patrick Frymark - Randy Smith MS
- Dave Devaughn - West Valley HS
- Gwen Brazier - Lathrop and West Valley
- Laura Capelle - ESSA Rep & Notetaker, and NEA-Alaska VP
- Michael Wenstrup - UniServ Director
- Grier Hopkins - UniServ Director

Building Visits Aug 28-31

If you did not have the opportunity to attend an informational meeting about the Tentative Agreement, FEA and state representatives will be visiting buildings the week of August 28th. This is a great time to join FEA, ask questions about the TA, learn about local candidates, and share your ideas, concerns, and passions with us.

Local Elections

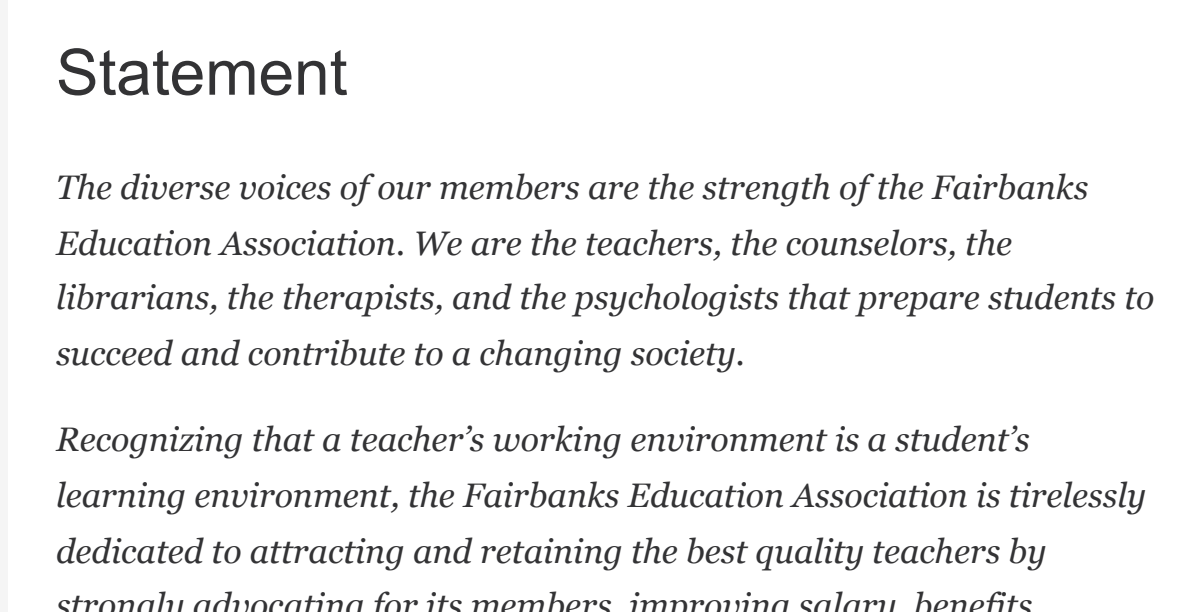


Local elections take place on Tuesday, October 3rd. This includes seats for School Board and Borough Assembly.

On August 22nd, all FEA members are invited to hear from our PACE Committee members and to vote on the candidates that FEA will recommend.

The League of Women Voters will be available during our PD Day September 1st to help register those who have moved or who are new to our community. Local elections have the greatest impact on our school district. Use your educator voice, and be informed, registered, and ready to vote.

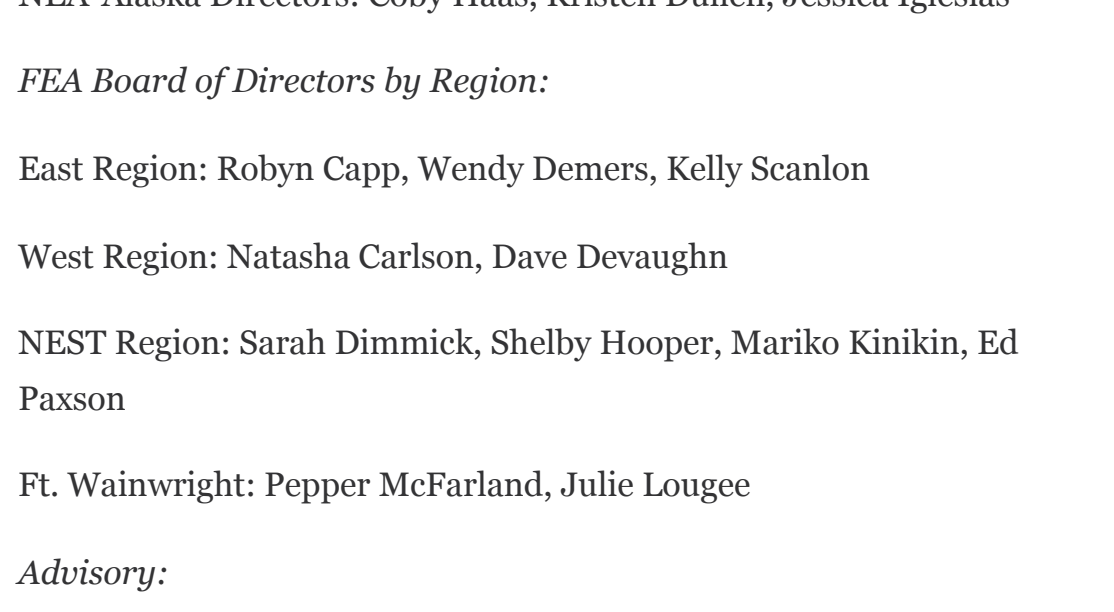
Summer Fun



FEA, ESSA, and FPA members at the Golden Days Parade

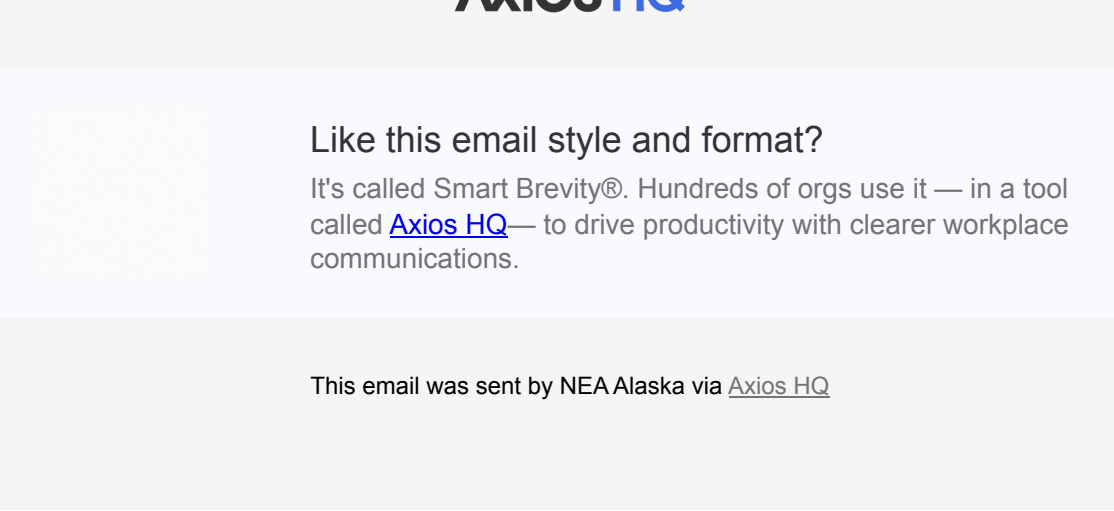
For the first time, members of FEA, ESSA, and FPA marched in the Golden Days Parade. We walked down the streets of our local community, waving to students past and present. Hearing the cheers of community members for us educators filled us with hope and appreciation. Thank you to all who participated!

And then there was the Tanana Valley State Fair. We had not had our traditional FEA/ESSA table since COVID struck! It was so nice to connect again with our community this way. We chatted with former students, welcomed new teachers to our district, handed out pencils, erasers, and calendars, and we strengthened our community partnerships. Thank you to everyone who lent a hand and had some fun at the fair.



The Alaska Delegation at the National Education Association's 2023 Representative Assembly

I was honored to attend NEA's Representative Assembly as a delegate in July. Representatives from across the nation met to set priorities and vote on initiatives at the national level. We did important work and heard from amazing speakers including Jill Biden, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, and our own Maxine Dibert!



Alaska State Representative and former FEA member Maxine Dibert

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- **Tuesday, August 22nd at 5:30pm at FEA Office**
General Membership Meeting to vote on recommendations for school board and borough assembly candidates.
- **Friday, August 25th at 5pm at Pioneer Park, Wilderness Pavilion**
FEA & ESSA Welcome Back BBQ
Learn about our TA while celebrating the start of a new school year with friends.
We will grill the dogs and burgers. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.
- **Friday August 25th & Saturday August 26th at Morris Thompson Cultural Center**
FEA Board Retreat
- **Monday August 28th - Friday August 31st**
Members of our FEA Board, committee members, and statewide leaders will be visiting schools throughout the district. Make time to say "hi" and learn more.
- **Friday August 31st from 4:30-6:30pm at North Pole HS**
Ratification vote for the Tentative Agreement. All FEA members are eligible to vote. Voting occurs in person. Photo ID required.

Why Your Contract Matters

Section 519 of our negotiated agreement provides,
A teacher may elect to have his/her children attend the school where the teacher is assigned to teach.

If your children piled into the car with you in this morning and are attending the school where you work, it is because of this contract language, assuming that the school is outside of your attendance area.

Fairbanks Education Association Value Statement

The diverse voices of our members are the strength of the Fairbanks Education Association. We are the teachers, the counselors, the librarians, the therapists, and the psychologists that prepare students to succeed and contribute to a changing society.

Recognizing that a teacher's working environment is a student's learning environment, the Fairbanks Education Association is tirelessly dedicated to attracting and retaining the best quality teachers by strongly advocating for its members, improving salary, benefits, retirement with dignity, and increasing funding for quality public education for all students. We support our members by offering life-long learning opportunities for growth through mentorship and meaningful professional development.

We empower our members to make professional decisions that positively impact our classrooms, community, and daily lives of our students.

FEA Board Members

FEA Officers:

- President - Danette Peterson
- Vice President - Patrick Frymark
- Recording Secretary - Paula Addis
- Treasurer - Melodee Sonnenberg
- Retired Past President: Sandi Ryan
- NEA-Alaska Directors: Coby Haas, Kristen Dullen, Jessica Iglesias
- FEA Board of Directors by Region:
- East Region: Robyn Capp, Wendy Demers, Kelly Scanlon
- West Region: Natasha Carlson, Dave Devaughn
- NEST Region: Sarah Dimmick, Shelby Hooper, Mariko Kinikin, Ed Paxson
- Ft. Wainwright: Pepper McFarland, Julie Lougee

Advisory:

- Retired Member Representative: Leslie Conner
- NEA-Alaska UniServ Directors: Michael Wenstrup and Grier Hopkins

Feedback

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