



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Jan 25, 2024

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President's Message - Get eady for Phase 3

When we were discussing the tentative agreement back in August, many expressed frustration. They thought that the salary increases which were the highest negotiated increases in twelve years were still not enough given the job demands and inflation. I agreed. I had many long talks and explained that I envisioned three phases to getting what we deserve. First, we had to get the best contract with the District given the financial realities. Done. Second, we needed to support local school board members and borough assembly members who were committed to funding public education. Done. And we will continue to engage in conversations with those members so students get the schools that they deserve.

The third phase that I described was to focus on our largest funding source — the state legislature. With the legislative session underway, we have reached this third phase. I will be doing my part to have those crucial conversations and advocate for our students and profession, but I can't do it alone. We are stronger when we stand together. So I will be calling upon you to make your educator voice heard and to advocate for our students. This isn't about us bargaining for a raise. It's about our students. It's about class sizes, maintaining programs and sports, providing needed support, and maintaining buildings so they are safe.

But, make no mistake about it, our educator voices alone will not get the job done. Education funding is a community issue and our legislators must hear from parents, business owners, and community partners. Schools shape our local communities. Schools provide vital resources and services to students and families. Education is the key to a robust workforce. Educators are the foundation for our future workforce.

Too often we have heard that we are *just* educators and our opinions are dismissed. We are told that we aren't *really* community members even if we are also parents, taxpayers, business owners, and volunteers. The disrespectful treatment is shameful and divides our community. We will not be silenced. We are educators who are passionate about students. We advocate for our students and by doing so we become role models for our students so they can advocate for themselves.

Nonetheless, I have learned that educators talking to other educators in the staff lounge is not enough. We already know how fragile our public education system is. Remember the days when we had hundreds of applicants for a single educator position? Remember the days of

building subs, elementary band and orchestra, districtwide art teachers for elementary students, and smaller classes to name a few? We need to engage in conversations about education funding beyond our classrooms. Please need to talk with our neighbors, business partners, and other community members. Share your personal stories with them and explain how flat funding has hurt students. Encourage them to take legislative action at bit.ly/raisetheBSA.

FEA will be asking parents and members of the community to engage in those conversations with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in February. We will ask families to share their support for Raising the BSA so students get the schools that they deserve. If you know a parent or community member who would like to participate in this outreach, please let me know. Together as a community and a state, we will show up for students and be their voice.

Legislative Updates



We jump-started the legislative session in Anchorage with our #RaiseTheBSA Rally. Then on the first day of the legislative session, which started on Tuesday, January 16th, educators across this District wore Red for Ed along with our administrators, Dr. Meinert, and school board members. Thank you to everyone who participated and to the photographers who shared building photos with me. Those pictures

were sent to our interior legislators along with my letter addressing our need to raise the base student allocation (BSA).

This past weekend I testified along with educators across the state in opposition to SB140, which would provide a \$300 increase to the BSA and retention bonuses to a few — but not all — of our members, leaving out counselors, librarians, and the many classified staff that make a difference for our students.

State Senator Kawasaki visited with me and Garrett Armstrong this past weekend to discuss education, and US Representative Mary Peltola visited Fairbanks and showed her support for our cries to raise education funding.

The good news is that the issue of education funding is being addressed early in the session, thus allowing Districts to truly know the budget they are working with and preventing our excellent educators from leaving because of job uncertainties.

Your voice matters. I will ask you to find ways throughout the session to Show Up For Students and to be a voice for them. Next week, I am asking you and your colleagues to sign a petition in support of raising the BSA. I will be hand-delivering those petitions when I speak to legislators in Juneau in mid-February.

My asks of you will acknowledge how tired and overworked you feel, but please don't lose sight of the fact that you do make a difference. To quote John F. Kennedy, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." I know that you make a difference every day in your classrooms for our students. These upcoming asks are a way for you to make a difference for each of our students across the District.

Together, we are stronger for our students.

If you are not getting our FEA Hustle Updates, please reach out to Alex Strickland at alex.strickland@neaalaska.org

Care and Connection:
bit.ly/FEAWellnessDay2024



FEA Health and Wellness Day

Saturday, January 27th

In order to promote self-care and wellness for our educators, FEA has organized a **free** health and wellness day for FEA Members. In addition to a range of free courses, there will be vendors, an entry for a raffle for a massage, and an entry in NEA Alaska's Alaska Airlines end-of-year drawing.

CLASS OFFERINGS

- **9:00- 10:00am Vinyasa Yoga**
Provided by: Sarah Smith from TRAX
Location: FEA Office
Class Limit: 12
- **10:15-11:15 Beginner - Advanced Guided Meditation**
Provided by: Buddhist Monk Tahn Andrew
Location: FEA Office
Class Limit: 15
- **11:30-12:30 Qigong**
Provided by: Hisako Heart Stream Yoga
Location: FEA Office
Class Limit: 10
Bring indoor athletic shoes.
- **1:00-2:00 Jazzercise**
Provided by: Carrie Heimer
Location: Jazzercise Fairbanks Fitness Center at 201 Old Steese Hwy. In the Steese Mall across from Taco King and Play It Again Sports. We're around back.
Class Limit: 25
Bring indoor athletic shoes.

REGISTRATION



<http://bit.ly/FEAWellnessDay2024>

Please use this QR code to:

- Reserve a spot in class, as class sizes are limited. (First come, first served. Walk ins welcome if spots are not filled)
- Sign up to be a vendor
- Contact FEA with any questions regarding the health and wellness day

Back in August, I asked you to care for yourself so you could be there for students, family, and loved ones. You can't run on empty and you can't give what you don't have. To incentivize self-care, this Saturday, FEA is offering a day of FREE self-care opportunities: yoga, meditation, Qigong, and Jazzercise. Try something new!

There is still time to join at bit.ly/FEAWellnessDay2024.

Thank you to our sponsors: TRAX Yoga, Heart Stream Yoga, and Jazzercise Fairbanks Fitness Center.

If that's not your cup of tea, check out other upcoming events to connect with colleagues:

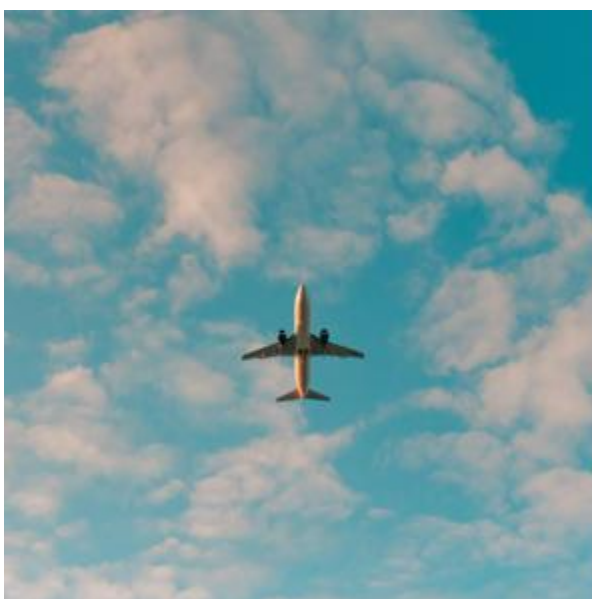
- **Cheers to Colleagues**

Lat 65 on Friday, February 2nd at 5 pm

- **Coffee with Colleagues**

Lulu's Bread & Bagels, Saturday, February 24th at 9 am

Alaska Airline Miles Winner!



Did you know that when you participate in FEA events, you are enrolled in a drawing for a free round trip on Alaska Airlines?

Congratulations to Megan Eilers from Hutchison High School who received an Alaskan Airlines complimentary round trip ticket. Recipients were announced during our 2024 Delegate Assembly by NEA-Alaska President Tom Klaameyer.

Megan has served on the Health Care Committee as an FEA Representative and participated in the Jump Start classes for National Board Certification.

Megan, thank you for serving colleagues, and enjoy that trip wherever you go!

Professional Development:
bit.ly/FEAPD-2024



MEDAL OF HONOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SECONDARY EDUCATOR TRAINING

EVENT DETAILS

This full-day training will provide you with all the tools you need to bring the Medal of Honor Character Development Program into your classroom. The flexible, cross-curricular resource, which uses the oral histories of Medal of Honor Recipients and citizen heroes, focuses on how students can use these examples of courage, commitment, sacrifice, integrity, citizenship and patriotism to influence change in their own communities. Middle and high school teachers from all subject areas along with counselors, coaches, and administrators are invited to attend this free training.

Wednesday | February 21st, 2024
Fairbanks Education Association
2118 S Cushman St.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

CHECK IN
8:00AM - 8:30AM

WORKSHOP
8:30AM - 3:00PM

TEACHERS ATTENDING THIS EVENT WILL

- Be eligible for graduate level extension credit through the University of San Diego
- Receive all resources at no cost
- Learn best practices for their classrooms
- Enjoy a complimentary lunch



FUNDING PROVIDED BY



To learn more about this program, visit cmohs.org or contact Erin Billmeyer, Education Programs Manager

ebillmayer@cmohs.org

TEACHER FEEDBACK

“The training was, without a doubt, one of the best I have ever attended. All participants were engaged and enthralled. It was fabulous!”

SPACE IS LIMITED

REGISTER TODAY!

Visit www.cmohs.org/training to register

The Congressional Medal of Honor Character Development Program will be taking place on Wednesday, February 21st. This is a free training and it provides the opportunity to earn graduate credit. This opportunity is being offered by FEA in collaboration with the District and will be held in the Board Room at the ADC. I am excited by this collaboration and look forward to future opportunities to work with the

District to provide learning opportunities to enrich your lives and your classrooms.

Do you have questions about FEA?

On January 30th and 31st, a few FEA members will be visiting educators who are new to our district, have questions, or were unable to connect with us in the fall. Educators can join our sick leave bank within 30 days of being hired. If there is a new educator in your building, please talk to them about membership so they don't miss that deadline!

If you have questions or would like to talk to someone about [FEA membership](#), please let me know and we will stop by.

Together, we are strong and can make a difference for students.

Contract Questions and Clarification



I sent the following in a separate email this week, but I believe that it's worthy of repeating in case you missed it the first time.

Many of you have reached out recently regarding the contracts for the upcoming year that you have received from HR. In response to

inquiries, I am sharing the Professional Teaching Practices Commission language that was adopted in 2022. As a member of PTPC, I was a part of crafting the revised language. Should you have further questions about your contract or PTPC, please reach out to me.

CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS:

*I. B. If the unilateral termination by the educator occurs after June 30th, **without persuasive mitigating circumstances**, such a violation will result in a minimum one-year suspension of the educator's certificate.*

*III.C. Resignations of contracts for the following school year should occur before June 30. Resignations after July 1 are treated as resignations from a current contract. **PTPC takes no action on unilateral contract resignations before June 30 for the next school year's contract.** PTPC may impose the one-year suspension for resignations after July 1 for the current contract.*

As we are all aware, there is an educator shortage nationwide. Providing information regarding your intent to return next school year helps the District plan to fill known vacancies. Please give careful consideration before signing your contract. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Human Resources. As always, I am glad to assist you.

Why Your Contract Matters



1-Year Leave of Absence: February 15th Deadline

If you are planning to take an unpaid leave of absence next year, please give your notice no later than February 15th. Article 205 of the Negotiated Agreement states,

- “A teacher with three (3) years of consecutive employment with the District may request leave for a period of one (1) full school term or for a semester. The request for a full school term or for a fall semester must be submitted no later than February 15.”

A change of status form must be completed: [Change of Status Form](#)

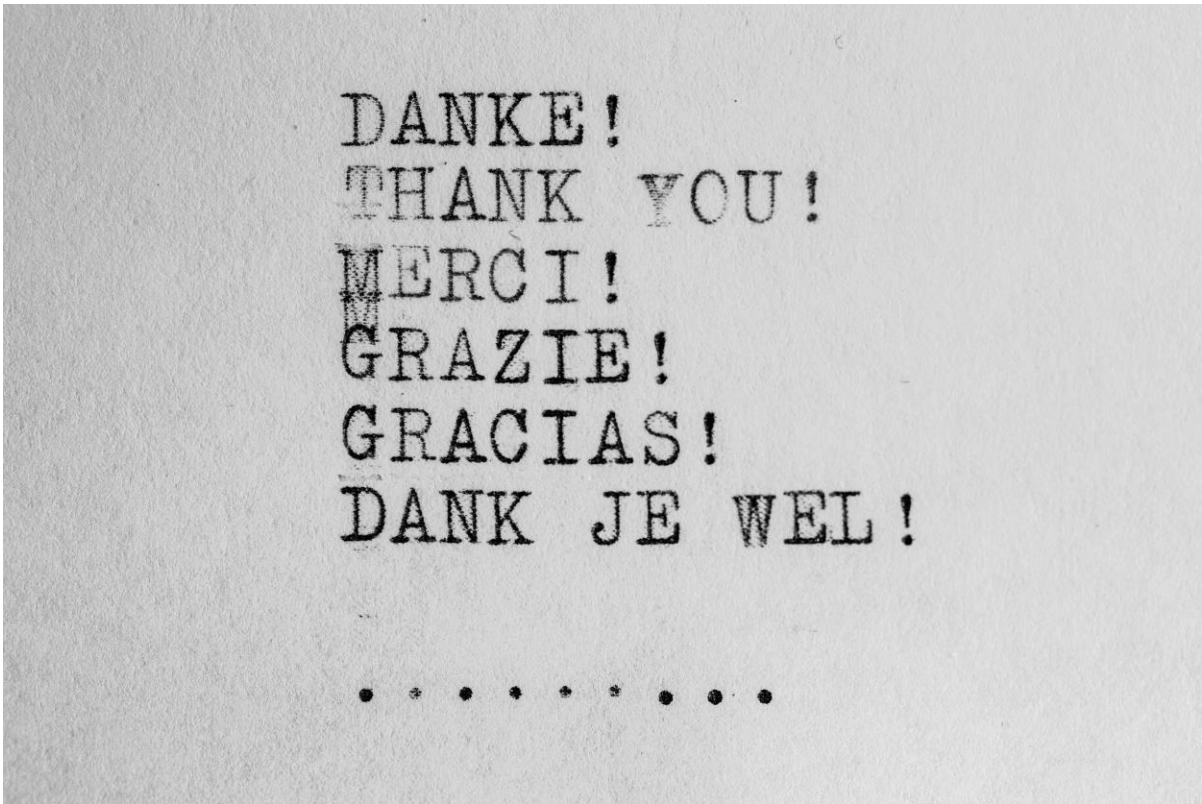
Once the form is completed, it needs to be emailed to:
labor.relations@k12northstar.org

Sick Leave Bank Donations for Retiring or Resigning Members

Retiring? Resigning? If you have accumulated sick days that you will not use, please consider donating them to your colleagues before you leave us. It is a wonderful way to pay-it-forward to our current and future educators to ensure that those in need can have surgery, recover from an accident, or care for a newborn for the first six-weeks without being on unpaid status. The donation form is on our FEA website: [FEA SLB Donation Form](#)

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity in considering this donation.

Thank You and Gratitude



Thank you to everyone who wore Red on the first day of our legislative session. We are in this together for our students!

Thank you to our FEA delegates who kicked off our #RaiseTheBSA Rally in Anchorage. I appreciate the time that you gave and the service you provided to our profession.

Thank you to State Senator Kawasaki and US Representative Peltola for talking about the schools that our students deserve and cannot get without additional funding.

Thank you to everyone who donated clothes to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and toiletries and needed items to The Door. The donations were greatly appreciated.

Thank you to our Health and Wellness Day sponsors: TRAX Yoga, Heart Stream Yoga, and Jazzercise Fairbanks Fitness Center.

FEAdback Classified Ads



All ads are run for two FEAdbacks, unless notified to remove. To view previously posted ads, visit our website: fairbankseducators.org and check the previous electronic editions.

Classified ads are included on a "space available" basis. ***IMPORTANT included classified ad in your subject line.***

Senior Scholarship Opportunity for FEA Members

The ZETA Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, an educators' sorority, is inviting graduating seniors to apply for one of several \$500 scholarships we will be awarding this spring. We ask you to please encourage your seniors to apply for this scholarship!

Qualifications and Instructions:

- Must be a 2024 graduating high school senior
- Must have, or have had, a parent, grandparent or guardian who is, or has been, a member of the Fairbanks Education Association (FEA), Education Support Staff (ESSA), or Fairbanks Principal Association (FPA) for at least one academic school year.

- The entire application packet must be complete and postmarked on or before March 1, 2024 and will include:
 - application cover page
 - a 250-word typed essay, “Describe Your Short-Term and Long-Term Goals and Where Do You See Yourself in Ten Years?”
 - an official transcript, including the first semester of the 2023-24 school year. The transcript must be signed by the appropriate school official.
 - a copy of their course schedule for the current semester
 - two letters of recommendation, one from a teacher or counselor and one from a person in the community. The letters must indicate the writer's relationship with the student (teacher, coach, employer, etc.).
 - school and community activities and awards form

The complete packet must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2024 and mailed in one envelope to:

- Robyn Atkins
Zeta Chapter Scholarship Chair
972 Windflower Lane
Fairbanks AK 99712

SAVE THE DATE:



Tuesday, January 23rd at 5:00 at FEA Offices

FEA Board of Directors Meeting

**Saturday, January 27th 9:00-2:00 at FEA and Jazzercise
Fitness Center**

Health and Wellness Day options

Wednesday, January 31st 5:00-7:00 at FEA Offices

Alaska History Course begins

Friday, February 2nd at 5:00 at Lat 65

Cheers to Colleagues

Tuesday, February 13th at 5:00-6:00 at FEA Offices

Building Representative Meeting

**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

Membership Secretary - Pepper McFarland

Treasurer - Melodee Sonnenberg

Immediate Past President: Sandi Ryan

NEA-Alaska Directors: Kristen Dullen, Jessica Iglesias, Karen Dullen

FEA Board of Directors by Region:

East Region: Robyn Capp, Wendy Demers, Robin Feinman, Kelly Scanlon

West Region: Garrett Armstrong, Natasha Carlson, Dave Devaughn, Kim Wallingford

NEST Region: Sarah Dimmick, Shelby Hooper, Mariko Kinikin, Ed Paxson

Ft. Wainwright: Laverne Haakanson, Julie Lougee

Advisory:

Retired Member Representative: Leslie Conner

NEA-Alaska UniServ Directors: Michael Wenstrup and Grier Hopkins

In solidarity,

Danette L. Peterson

President

Fairbanks Education Association

Feedback

Anonymously tell us what you thought of this edition. Your responses will help us create better content for you!

Was this edition useful?



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