



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Feb 08, 2024

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President's Message - Is It Really Teacher Burnout?



Yesterday, four of our Borough Assembly members toured various schools with me. Two of the principals spontaneously spoke about the exhaustion that their staff is experiencing. I am sure that the other two principals would have concurred if asked. When I spoke before the school board Tuesday, I asked them to find creative solutions to take something off of our too-full plates as we look ahead towards adding **five more students** into our classes next year.

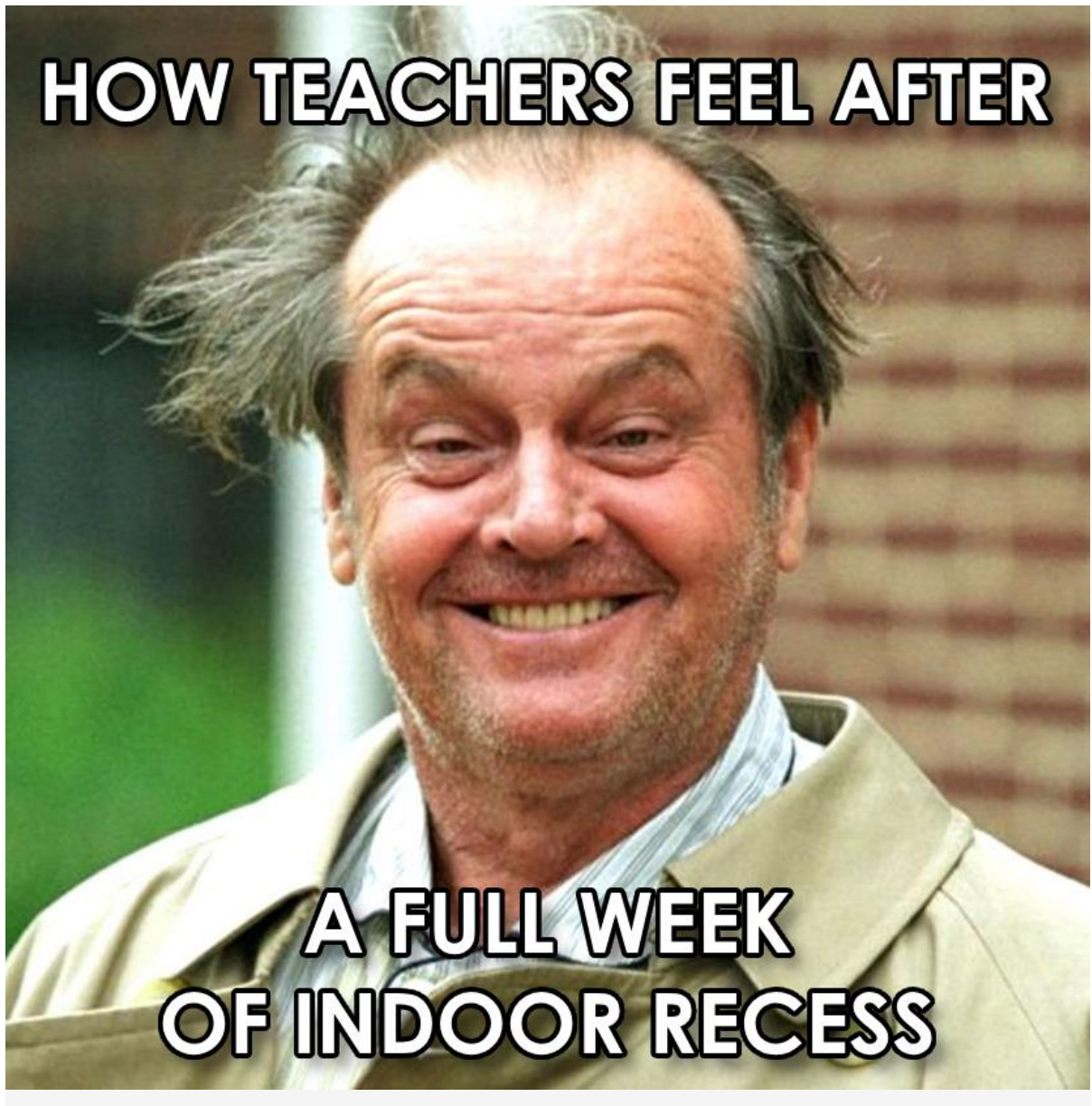
We have all likely heard the phrase “teacher burnout”, and I have even used the phrase myself. But, after reading a recent article on demoralization, I am questioning if it accurately depicts what is going on. I have come to realize that the phrase implies some blame on educators themselves. Those of us who are burned out “just aren’t strong enough for the job.” You “failed.” You “couldn’t hack it.” You “didn’t preserve yourself.” This narrative focuses on the individual and not the institutional or systemic problems.

What is causing teacher burnout? Ask any educator who has been in the profession for a while and they will tell you how the job has changed. More students per class. Less time to prepare. Inadequate support for early-career educators. More meetings. Greater time spent record-keeping and documenting. Less work-life balance. Ever-changing curriculum. Unfunded demands that cannot be fulfilled during the work

day. Sub shortages. Greater student needs that are coupled with fewer resources. Less respect. And, of course, a vocal minority that engages in teacher-bashing in a variety of ways.

Sadly, budget woes add to the exhaustion and deflation of educators. It's hard to listen to our District talk about school closures, personnel cuts, and deficits. I feel the anxiety; it's palpable when members call or email me. They worry about job security, involuntary transfers that impact child care, what they might be asked to teach next year, and how will they meet student needs when five more students are added to already crowded classrooms? I wish I had a way to quickly make everything better, rather than fighting year after year for what we and our students deserve. Battle is exhausting. Unfortunately, I don't have that magic wand — but I can raise our voices so that they are heard and not ignored.

Engage with me in thinking outside the box to find creative ways to take “things” off of our over-filled plates and provide more time for planning, reflection, and creativity. When I spoke before the school board on Tuesday, I asked members to acknowledge that our burdens must be lightened as we are asked to work with fewer staff and nurture more students per class. Together, let's find ways to bring forth initiatives and find answers. Talk with me and other colleagues as we seek solutions to our systemic challenges. I would love to chat with you over coffee on the 24th or to come to your building for lunch. Please, let's acknowledge the problems and work together as an association to find ways to create opportunities for change so we can do more of what we love — teach.



Legislative Updates



Robyn Taylor, Dave Dershin, Shawna Henderson, and Grant Guy with Representative Ashley Carrick

Borough Ordinance 2024-07

Borough Ordinance 2024-07 proposes to hold a special election for a tax revenue cap calculation revision of an additional \$10,000,000 in total revenue that can be derived from any areawide source for the purpose of funding public education. The entire ordinance in its entirety can be found [here](#). Thank you to David Guttenberg, Savannah Fletcher, Liz Reeves-Ramos, and Nick LaJiness for touring various school sites yesterday to get a better understanding of our situation and what things would look like if the proposed cuts were implemented.

This ordinance is on today's Borough Assembly agenda and public testimony on the matter will begin at 7 p.m. If you can attend and testify in-person, please sign up to testify. If you are not able to testify in person, **please send written testimony**. Information on testifying and providing written testimony can be found at [Stay Connected with the Assembly](#).

Statement in Support of Raising the BSA.

If your building has not yet provided me with your staff's statement in support of increasing the BSA (Base Student Allocation) please send that to me so I can deliver copies of all of those petitions to each

legislator that I speak to while in Juneau next week. I want them to see how unified we are on this issue.

BSA Conversations During PTC Days

As we did last year, I am asking you to **wear Red for Ed during Parent Teacher Conference Days**. It's a visible symbol that raises public awareness and builds solidarity among us. We are also partnering with PTAs and other community partners to engage in conversations with families during Parent-Teacher Conference Days. If you know someone on your school's PTA who would like to hand out pencils and encourage families to scan a QR Code to support an increase in the BSA (Base Student Allocation), please let us know. We will look forward to engaging community members in these vital conversations. We are all in it together and we are all showing up for students. Thank you principals for going to Juneau and showing up for our students!

SB-88 Pensions for Public Service

Senate Bill 88 (SB 88), Senator Cathy Giessel's (R-Anchorage) proposal to restore pensions for public service passed the Alaska State Senate! SB 88 represents our best hope to fix the broken educator retirement system. On Monday, the bill will be referred to committees in the Alaska State House and we will know which committee chairs will be responsible for hearing SB 88. Stay tuned.

Stay Informed with President Tom Klaameyer's #AKLeg Update

If you are not receiving NEA Alaska President Tom Klaameyer's Legislative Updates or my text message Hustles, please let us know so you can stay informed by contacting us at fea@alaska.net or 907-456-4435.



Nominations for FEA Elections: Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly

It's hard to imagine, but it's time to start thinking about what FEA's Board of Directors will look like next year. This year, Board of Director seats are open for our Ft. Wainwright Region (Ladd, Tanana, Nordale, and Arctic Light) and East Region (Barnette Magnet School, Boreal Sun Charter School, Career Education Center, Chinook Charter School, Denali Elementary School, Hunter Elementary School, Golden Heart Academy, Lathrop High School, Ryan Middle School, Weller Elementary School, and programs housed at Administration Building. FEA Directors to the Board serve for a two-year term. If you are interested in serving as a member on FEA's Board of Directors and your home school is in one of these two regions, **please send your bio of 50 words or less to Vice President Patrick Frymark (patrick.frymark@k12northstar.org) by 5 pm on Monday, February 26th.**

Nominations are also open for Representative Assembly and for those wishing to serve on Delegate Assembly 2025. Those interested in running for Representative Assembly must have attended Delegate Assembly 2024. If you are interested in serving, **please send your bio of 50 words or less to Vice President Patrick Frymark (patrick.frymark@k12northstar.org) by 5 pm on Monday, February 26th.**

Thank you all who have served in the past or are serving presently.

Creating Welcoming and Safe Classrooms for LGBTQ+ Students



Join GSA Sponsor Amy Gallaway and others on Saturday, February 24th from 9:30 a.m. to noon to learn strategies to create safe and welcoming learning environments for all students, specifically LGBTQ+ students. We will start with the basics of LGBTQ+ etiquette and research on how LGBTQ+ students are experiencing school and then develop and practice strategies that address barriers to safety and create more welcoming spaces. Student GSA members will be guest presenters and available for questions.

Connect... Coffee with Colleagues



COFFEE *with* COLLEAGUES

It's YOU time!
Join us for a morning
of relaxation and
casual conversation



LuLu's Bread and Bagels
364 Old Chena Pump Rd.



YOU



COLLEAGUE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24
9:00AM

www.fairbankseducators.org

Share your concerns, thoughts and stories with me and others over a cup of java. I would love to hear your thoughts about the budget, ways to lighten educator loads or whatever is on your mind.

Why Your Contract Matters: SPED Paperwork Days and Time for Your Own Parent-Teacher Conferences

SCAN ME



FairbanksEducators.org

SPED Paperwork Days - Article 606

New contract language contained in Article 606 now provides special education teachers with two (2) additional workdays each school year to complete requirements for their case management documentation such as IEPs and progress reports. If the absence cannot be filled with a substitute employee, the educator may receive a contract extension at the per diem rate. If you have any questions about Article 606, please call me.

Parent Teacher Conference Time - Article 506.4

If you are an educator who is a parent of school-aged children, you may request two (2) hours to attend your own children's parent-teacher conferences. This time is not deducted from your personal leave or sick leave. Please talk to your building administrator to secure this time to talk to your children's teachers. If you have any questions about Article 506, please call me.

Milken Educator Award Goes to Our Very Own Megan Eilers!



And the winner is...

If you haven't heard, congratulations are in order for our own Megan Eilers, who was recently honored as a recipient of the Milken Educator Award. Megan Eilers is a health career CTE educator at Hutchison High

School. She recently served FEA members as one of the representatives on the joint Health Care Committee

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) Chief Executive Officer Dr. Joshua Barnett presented the award to Megan along with a \$25,000 cash prize. Dr. Barnett stated that, "Megan Eilers provides her students with a wholly immersive, one-of-a-kind education that they will remember for the rest of their lives. Megan ignites a passion in students beyond facts and figures as they participate in highly engaging labs, develop lifesaving skills, and learn real-life strategies from healthcare professionals. Megan works every day to ensure students are prepared for bright futures, and for that, will be a treasured asset to the Milken Educator Network."

Gratitude and Thank you



Thank you to our sponsors for our recent Health and Wellness Day: Trax Yoga, Heart Stream Yoga, Tahn Andrew of North of Sixty Meditation Group, and Jazzercise Fitness Center in Fairbanks. We appreciate you supporting the self-care efforts of our educators.

Thank you to our administrators for advocating for an increase in the BSA so students can get the schools that they deserve. Pictured above in

our Legislative Update section are Robyn Taylor, Dave Dershin, Shawna Henderson, and Grant Guy with Representative Ashley Carrick

Thank you to Borough Assembly members Liz Reeves-Ramos, Savannah Fletcher, David Guttenberg, and Nick LaJiness for touring our schools and learning how budget cuts will impact our students.

Thank you to Professor Philip Wright who is teaching our Alaska History class and to those who are taking it. It is my pleasure to support educators with their certifications.

Thank you to FEA members who visited new educators in our District and others whom we had not yet connected with.

And, let us take a moment to be grateful for warmer temperatures and increasing sunlight. We sure had a few cold days there. Brrrr!

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!

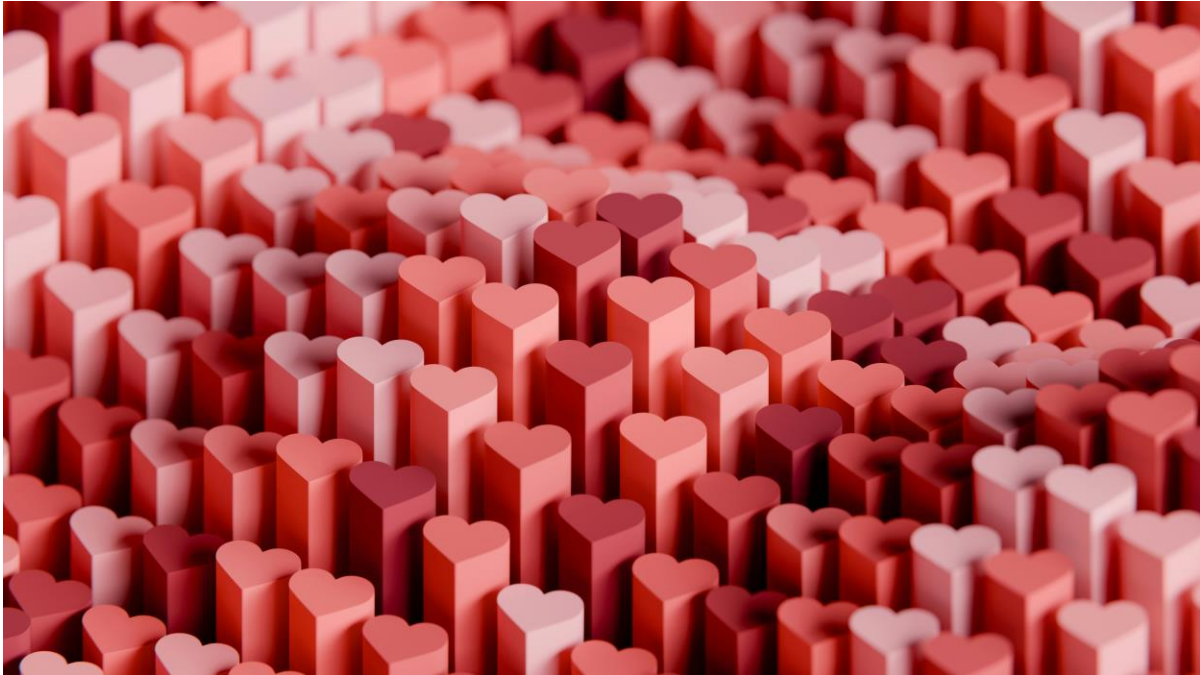
Qualifications and Instructions:

- 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

Upcoming Events: Save the Date



- **Tuesday, February 13th at 5:00-6:00 pm at FEA Offices**
Building Representative Meeting
- **Thursday, February 15 at 5:30 pm at 907 Terminal Street**
Testify in person before the Borough Assembly on Ordinance 2024-07 or provide written testimony
- **Monday, February 19th and Tuesday, February 20th**
PTA engagement with families regarding the BSA and education funding
- **Saturday, February 24th at 9:00 am Lulu's Bagels**
Coffee with Colleagues
- **Saturday, February 24th at 9:30 at FEA Offices**
Creating Welcoming and Safe Classrooms for LGBTQ Students
- **Monday, February 26th by 5:00 pm**
Deadline to submit bios to Patrick Frymark for FEA Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly

- **Tuesday, February 27th at 5:00 at FEA Offices**

FEA Board of Directors Meeting

- **Friday, May 10th at Pike's**

FEA Retirement Celebration - details forth coming

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, and 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

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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