



# FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Mar 08, 2024

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# President's Message - Spring Renewal



I love this time of year. Spring — it holds so much promise. The cold winter days of  $-54^{\circ}$  are behind us. The world begins to wake from its cold weather slumber. As Anne Bradstreet said, “If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant.” The weather is warming. The days are longer. Cross-country skiing becomes more comfortable. Birds start chirping. Flowers start blooming. Easter egg hunts happen in shrinking piles of snow. The patches of green grass soon appear, as do the buds on the trees. It is a time when the Earth wakes to dance in color and sound. Every year during Spring Break, I shovel the snow off of my back deck as a way of letting Mother Nature know, in no uncertain terms, that I am ready to unpack the outdoor furniture and BBQ outside. Sometimes she listens — more often than not, she doesn’t quite hear — but at least I have made my intentions known to her.

It’s easy to get ahead of oneself during this time of year. Even the beginning of Daylight Savings Time invites us to leap forward an hour. My mind races to the end of the school year and thoughts of summer plans swirl in my head. Gardening. Biking. Paddleboarding. Hiking. Many of us take on second jobs. Some have travel plans. Others plan weekend camping trips with friends. Or maybe floating down the Chena is more your speed. For me, the list of household projects grows a bit

each weekend. The summer months seem to go so fast that it's easy to overbook and overcommit ourselves.

Spring Break is not only a time for looking ahead to summer but also for celebrating all that our students have accomplished thus far this year. Remember back to the first day of school. Spring is a wonderful time to remember how beautiful change can truly be. Think of all the things that your students have accomplished. Class routines learned. Skills developed. Content grasped and understood. Community celebrations. Friendships made and more. It is a time to celebrate all of the growth that your students and you have made. It's a time to reflect upon the personal gains that you, too, have made.

But wait — we still have one more quarter ahead. Before we get to the end of the school year, we need to get through Quarter 4. Quarter 4 marks the race to the end of the school year and it is jam-packed with school testing, celebrations, picnics, field trips and graduations. It can be exhausting. We need to pace ourselves during Quarter 4. It is indeed a marathon and not a sprint. Pace yourself. Use the upcoming break to breathe and hit that pause button before you begin your marathon race known as Quarter 4. Allow Spring Break to be a time for rest and play. Dance. Skip. Whistle. Sing. Laugh. Celebrate. Turn toward the sun and revive. Spring is a time for renewal and I wish that this upcoming break is just that for you.



# STAGES OF SECOND SEMESTER

- Dark when you get to school, dark when you leave
- Hoping for a snow day
- Counting down to spring break
- "Is it spring or just a weird warm day trying to trick us into thinking winter is finally over?"
- Stressing about state testing
- Spring allergies or another round of the flu?
- "That sounds like an August problem."
- Setting unrealistic expectations for everything you're going to get done over the summer

*@weareteachers*

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# Shortened Calendar and Furlough Days



Last night, the FEA Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose any Memorandum of Agreement that would shorten the school calendar and result in a loss of compensation for members. All of the feedback provided in the survey was considered by the members of the FEA Board. A letter of explanation was shared with members at their personal email addresses. I appreciate everyone who shared their thoughts. Many of you shared budget suggestions in the comment section which I urge you to share directly with the School Board at [schoolboard@k12northstar.org](mailto:schoolboard@k12northstar.org).

## **If not furlough days, then what?**

We need to hold to account those responsible for the funding fiasco that we find ourselves in. That requires action on the part of every educator in partnership with our community. **Our students need you to write an email about class size and cutting 100 educators. Our students need you to write to the Governor and legislators about the need for education funding. Our students need you to participate in our March for Education on March 11th. Our students need you to vote “yes” in the Special Election on May 7th. We can hold those responsible if we stand up for what we know is right alongside our community partners.**



- Contact your area's elected representatives at: [bit.ly/RaiseThe BSA](https://bit.ly/RaiseTheBSA)
- Share a public opinion message with all legislators:  
<https://www.akleg.gov/poms>

Email the governor and legislators: [gov.allegislators@alaska.gov](mailto:gov.allegislators@alaska.gov)

**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](mailto:fea@alaska.net) or 907-456-4435.

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# March for Education & Legislative Updates

# MARCH FOR EDUCATION

*our kids, our schools, our future*



**JOIN US IN NORTH POLE TO  
SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS!**

**MONDAY  
MARCH 11TH**

**5:30PM -  
RALLY FOR EDUCATION**  
Outside of North Pole Highschool

**6:00PM -  
MARCH TO BUDGET FORUM**  
In North Pole Highschool Library



Attend the North Pole March for Education and Budget Forum. Stand up for students and show the community that we are in this together.

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# Legislative Interior Offices Open House

Join  
**REPRESENTATIVE GARRICK**  
**SENATOR KAWASAKI**  
**REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT**  
for a  
**TOWN HALL**  
Saturday, March 9  
11:30 AM-1 PM  
Fairbanks LIO  
1292 Sadler Way  
3rd Floor

A photograph of three individuals smiling against a blue background with white stars. On the left is a woman with long brown hair, glasses, and a blue top with a white scarf. In the center is a man with glasses, a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a striped tie. On the right is a woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow top. The background features several white stars of varying sizes, some of which are partially obscured by the text above.

Please take some time Saturday to share your classroom stories with Representatives Carrick and Dibert, and Senator Kawasaki. Your stories are important and no one knows your classroom better than you do. How will cutting 100 educators and increasing class size by 5 impact your students? How will school closures impact our local community? Sharing your stories helps them amplify your voice in Juneau.

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## Local Elections



Before you begin your Spring Break adventures take a moment to vote in FEA's local elections. Members are running for Regional seats on our Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly and Regional Assembly. They serve us collectively and our professional at the local, state, and national levels.

The link to your ballot can be found in your personal email. If you can't find it, please double-check your Spam/Junk/etc. folders. If you still can't find it, please reach out to Alex Strickland for assistance during normal business hours at 907-456-4435.

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# ESP of the Year Nominations



Are you working with an outstanding ESP? Please [nominate](#) them for NEA Alaska's ESP of the year award. The NEA-Alaska ESP of the Year is awarded to a non-certificated member of NEA-Alaska on an annual basis. This award is designed to recognize the outstanding contributions that individual members make to their schools, communities, and local associations. Nominations must be received by May 1, 2024.

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**Keep Our Weller School Community  
in Your Thoughts** ♡





Please keep our Weller School Community in your thoughts over Spring Break. Many thoughts and prayers go out to their staff and families as they deal with the recent tragedy.

## Scholarship for Seniors Planning to Pursue a Career in Public Education



NEA-Alaska is pleased to announce the rollout of a new scholarship opportunity available to Alaska high school seniors who are planning to pursue careers in public education.

### **Basic Information**

- A total of \$5,000 has been made available for each NEA-Alaska Region
- Scholarships will be awarded at levels between \$1,000 and \$5,000 depending on the number of applicants, their eligibility, and the assessment of their applications by a regional Scholarship Review Committee
- Applications must be submitted online via this [Google Form](#)
- The deadline to submit scholarship applications is **[Sunday, April 7, 2024, at 11:59 PM.](#)**

**If you have any questions**, please feel free to reach out to us at [info@neaalaska.org](mailto:info@neaalaska.org).

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## **Gratitude & Thank you**



Thank you to everyone who testified over the past few weeks about the budget, class sizes, school closures and how the deficit will impact our schools and local community.



Thank you to those who attended our Coffee with Colleagues and spoke with school board members Bobby Burgess and Meredith Maple.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the furlough survey and provided feedback that helped to guide your FEA Board of Directors

## Upcoming Events & Important Dates



- **Monday, March 11th at 5:30 pm at North Pole High School**  
March for Education Rally and Budget Forum
- **Thursday, March 14th at midnight**  
FEA Spring elections close
- **Friday, March 15th at 9:00 am at FEA Offices**  
First Aid Training
- **Saturday, March 16th at 9:00 am at FEA Offices**  
CPR Training

- **Tuesday, March 26th at 5:00 at FEA Offices**  
FEA Board of Directors Meeting
- **Friday, May 10th at Pike's**  
FEA Retirement Celebration at Pike's

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## FEAdback Classified Ads



*All ads are run for two FEAdbacks, unless notified to remove. To view previously posted ads, visit our website: [fairbankseducators.org](http://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.***

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# 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.*

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## 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: Karen Dullen, Kristen Dullen, Jessica Iglesias

*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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