



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Mar 21, 2024

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President's Message



Due to our \$29 million deficit, the School Board felt it necessary to consider closing four neighborhood schools, with one — Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High — ultimately being selected for closure. I understand the position of those who advocate for paying for thriving classrooms instead of paying for empty square footage, but let's not forget that school closures have negative impacts that should not be ignored or dismissed. As a community, we need to recognize and acknowledge those impacts and work to minimize them.

Just two years ago, we closed two schools and repurposed a third. Fairbanks is not the only district facing school closures. Discussions about closing schools are occurring across the state and nation. Anchorage school closures are on the table for 2025 and Juneau is considering ways to avoid school closures.

School closures can negatively impact attendance and participation. Closures often result in increased commute times and lessen the ability of students to participate in after-school clubs and sports. Longer commutes also limit the ability of parents to engage in their child's school as volunteers, attend evening events, and participate in conferences. We heard these points reiterated repeatedly by our Two Rivers community which would have faced far longer commutes had their school closed. These impacts may be self-evident.

What is less evident is that research shows that in other places facing school closures, student test scores and grade point averages fell in the year before and immediately after school closures. These are the same test scores that those in Juneau are demanding we as educators raise before we get more funding. The demands in Juneau for accountability and higher test scores run counter to the financial starvation being imposed upon districts to the point of needing to close neighborhood schools.

Oakland, Denver, and other places nationwide are seeing higher rates of school closures in communities that serve higher percentages of students of color. At the same time, these places were opening charter schools. According to NEA Today, "In other words, at the same time state officials were closing schools in Oakland's Black neighborhoods, they opened more than 30 charter schools. (Those charter schools siphoned \$57 million out of public schools)". While our situation here in Fairbanks is certainly different than that in Oakland or Denver and not racially motivated, let's be aware of what is occurring in schools across the country.

Let's also not negate the hardships our Ben Eielson school community and families are working through. Please welcome those students, staff, and families into their new school communities and help ease their transition. And let us not forget to remind those in Juneau that when they force districts across the state to close schools they are making it harder for those students to succeed. Instead of them demanding accountability from us, I ask you to hold them accountable for their actions.

Legislative Updates & Budget Decisions



As you likely know, on Monday, the Alaska State Legislature failed to override Governor Dunleavy's veto of SB 140 by one vote. Thank you to Representatives Carrick, Dibert, and Stapp, along with Senators Bishop and Kawasaki, for standing by your vote to support funding for public education. As a result of the legislature's failure to override the veto, our School Board had more difficult financial decisions to make as it finalized our balanced budget last night. The Governor's veto of SB 140 made balancing our District's budget more difficult and resulted in deep cuts across departments including cuts to teachers (FTE), reduced programs, an increase to the PTR, and closure of Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High.

Our fight is not over. We will stand with parents, students and our community partners in the weeks ahead to secure the funding for education that is needed.

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.

Why Your Contract Matters

SCAN ME



FairbanksEducators.org

Scan the QR Code to bookmark our negotiated agreement and the recent MOAs.

The FEA eBoard of Directors authorized me to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the District to extend member rights under Article 205 of the negotiated agreement. This specific language is applicable to educators working at Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High.

The additional language states as follows:

If a school closure occurs due to a Board of Education decision, and it happens after February 15, a teacher from the affected school may request an unpaid leave of absence. The request must be sent to the human resources department within two weeks of the closure decision. This extension does not affect the forty-eight (48) hour requirement as outlined in Article 401.

If desired, educators at Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High must provide human resources written notice of their desire to take a one-year unpaid leave of absence by **April 2, 2024**.

Article 401 of the negotiated agreement addresses Transfers and Reassignments and provides the following language:

VII. Building Closures

B. Teachers that are impacted by a school closure will be subject to the involuntary transfer procedures as outlined in this article and will be asked for their placement preference should the District have more than one placement available to which they qualify and allows for the least amount of staffing impacts.

III. Voluntary Transfer

A teacher must have completed at least two (2) years of employment with the District to be eligible for a voluntary transfer. A teacher may apply for transfer to positions posted in the second semester of a teacher's second year of employment for the forthcoming school year.

***Exceptions: A first year part time teacher seeking a full-time position or a first-year teacher identified as an involuntary transfer for the upcoming school year may apply for a transfer.**

The entire negotiated agreement including any MOAs can be found on our [website](#).

Your Opinion Matters



Are you ready to let those in Juneau know you have had ENOUGH already? Please take this short [survey](#) and let us know what actions you are ready to take. Your input will guide our next steps.



CPR Training



Connie Browder, retired teacher and American Heart Association trainer, is offering one final CPR certification class on Saturday, April 27th. The cost for the course is \$35.00 which covers the cost of the handbook, mask, test, and certification card. Please [register](#) for the course. A minimum of eight participants is needed to offer the training. A maximum of twelve participants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The training filled very quickly last time and we had a waitlist so don't wait.

Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom



[Register](#) here for NEA Webinars - AI in Education:

AI AND TEACHING: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF AI TECHNOLOGIES ON PLANNING, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT on March 27th

AI FOR GOOD: EXPLORING ETHICS, EQUITY, & DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH AI EDUCATION on April 24th

Contracts & Certificates



If you have signed a contract with the District and have determined that you are *not* planning to return next year, please notify Human Resources immediately so they can begin to fill positions as needed. You may not enter into two contracts so you must get out of one employment contract prior to signing another.

As a reminder, the deadline to provide notice to the District if you are not planning to return next year is June 30th pursuant to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC). Failure to do so will result in a one-year suspension of an educator's license absent persuasive mitigating circumstances.

I. PTPC PROCEDURES ON BREACH OF CONTRACT

“A. An educator under contract with a school district who fails to give written notice of intent to terminate the contract, or who leaves the position following such notice without having the written assent of the employer, shall be deemed to have breached the contract and may be subject to disciplinary action including possible revocation of certificates by the PTPC.

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.”

Renewing your License - Submit Your Application EARLY!

Please take a moment to verify when your [teaching license expires](#). Many licenses expire over the summer when it is easy to miss the deadline. If you need to earn credits for renewal, please do so now! If you have what is needed for renewal, please submit your application early. DEED is going through a transition and is short-staffed which is leading to unusual delays up to 10 weeks.

FEA Scholarship Opportunities

FEA is offering a few scholarship opportunities. The Martin Luther King Scholarship and the Elizabeth Peratrovich Scholarship. [The Deadline for submissions is Friday, April 12th.](#)

Three scholarships will be awarded in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the following amounts:

- Two - \$250 scholarships
- One - \$500 scholarship

Three scholarships will be awarded in Honor of Elizabeth Peratrovich in the following amounts:

- Two - \$250 scholarships
- One - \$500 scholarship

Scholarship Applications can be found here:

- [Martin Luther King, Jr. Application.](#)
- [Elizabeth Peratrovich Application.](#)

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NEA-Alaska Scholarship Opportunities



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.

ESP 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.

Gratitude & Thank You



Thank you to everyone who attended a Town Hall Meeting, attended a rally, wrote an email, made a phone call, or signed a petition in support of education and increasing the Base Student Allocation. Your voices are being heard in Juneau and locally.

Thank you to everyone who attended the First Aid and CPR training offered over Spring Break. A big shout out to Connie Browder, American Heart Association trainer and former Ben Eielson teacher, for volunteering her time to do the training, which keeps our students safer.

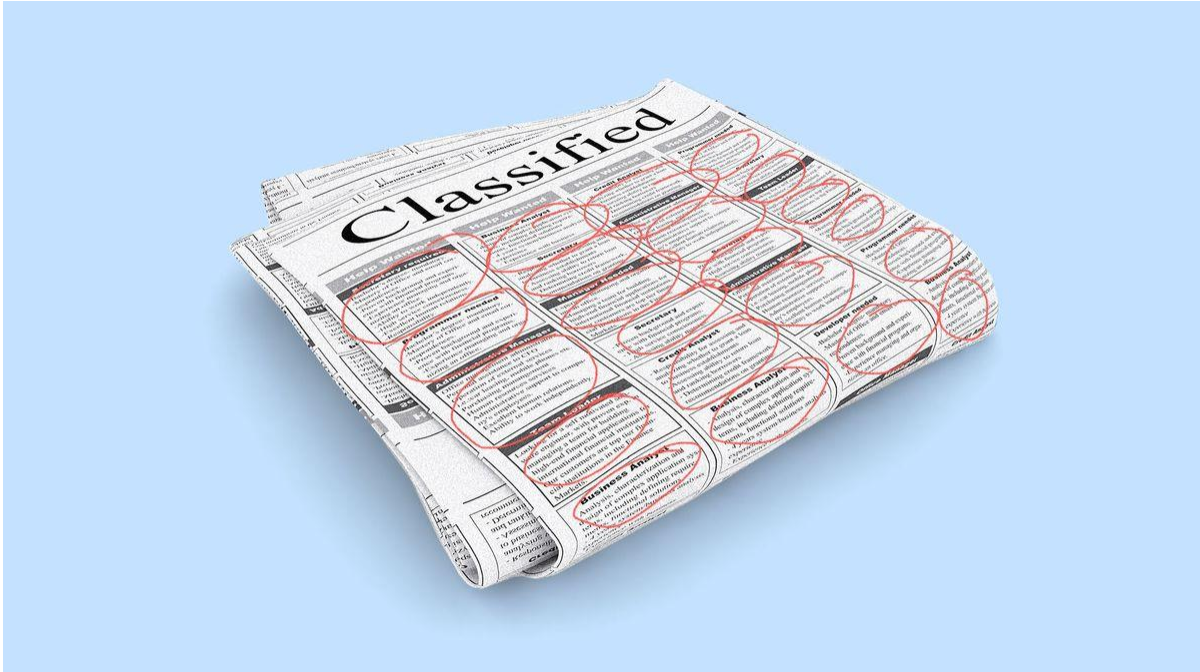
Thank you to everyone who voted in our FEA Spring election. Those results will be certified on Tuesday at our FEA Board meeting and the results will be published thereafter.

Upcoming Events & Important Dates



- **Tuesday, March 26th at 5:00 at FEA Offices**
FEA Board of Directors Meeting
- **Tuesday, April 9 at 5:00 at FEA Offices**
FEA Building Rep Meeting
- **Friday, May 10th at Pike's**
FEA Retirement Celebration at Pike's

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.***

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!

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