



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Apr 05, 2024

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President's Message - Finding Inspiration in Unexpected Places



Students walkout in Juneau, April 4, 2024

This message finds you a day later than intended because I was sick with whatever virus has been going around. Ughhh. When I started planning this, I had a different topic in mind to share with you — and then yesterday, the students in Juneau, Sitka, and Homer arrived. Students in Juneau marched to the capital and made their voices heard in the House Finance Committee. Other students walked out elsewhere for 40 minutes - representing the 40 votes needed to override Governor Dunleavy's veto of SB 140. Other students across the state communicated their concerns and frustrations with the Prioritize My Education photos being shared with legislators.

As I watched the video and photos, my heart swelled with pride and ached all at once. These students found various ways to make their voices heard independent of adults handing them a script and telling them what to do and how to do it. They found their own direction and path. I crossed my fingers and hoped that maybe, just maybe, those in Juneau would listen to them — unlike us educators who are often dismissed as “special interest”. I hoped these students felt empowered, heard, and respected. As a government teacher, I often felt that by the end of the semester my students were more informed than those in the general public. Their awareness and civic engagement gave me hope for the future.

However, my heart also ached that the financial realities have hit our students to the point that they felt it necessary to take some action. Students across the state are facing school closures, fewer course offerings, larger classes, programs being eliminated, and decreased funding of activities. I wish these students were preparing for prom, graduation, and field day activities rather than fighting for adequate funding for the schools they and our communities deserve.

But mostly, I was inspired by them. If these 14-18 year-olds can organize and raise their collective voices to be heard, so can we. Yes, we shouldn't have to fight for funding, job security, and retirement with dignity — but our students shouldn't have to champion for their basic rights, either. I wouldn't be surprised if these students and others will find ways to inspire us again and make their voices heard moving forward.

Should students in our District desire to walk out or engage in political action, please remember the following: Stay neutral. Don't engage in political activity using District email. Don't engage in political activity on school grounds. As a citizen you may engage in political activity outside of the contract day — weekend sign waving, evening rallies, phone banking, etc.

But let those students inspire us when our motivation is waning. We find ourselves in between education bills right now and this is a great time for us to breathe and celebrate our students and all they have accomplished this school year.

If they can do it, **so can we.**



Prioritize My Education

PACE Committee Meets Monday, April 8th



The joint FEA and ESSA Political Action Committee will be meeting Monday, April 8th to interview the candidates who have declared for Borough Mayor. Dinner and discussion begin at 5:00 pm. Interviews begin at 5:30 pm and conclude at 7:00 pm.

Anyone who is interested in supporting pro-public education candidates is welcome to participate.

#FbxEdFest - April 24th



April 24th

#FBXEdFest

Golden Heart Plaza

5:00 - 6:30 PM

Gear Up For #FbxEdFest by wearing Red every Wednesday.

Join us for family-friendly fun as we gather as a community to support public education. Parents, business owners, and community members are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with us so our community can get the schools we deserve.

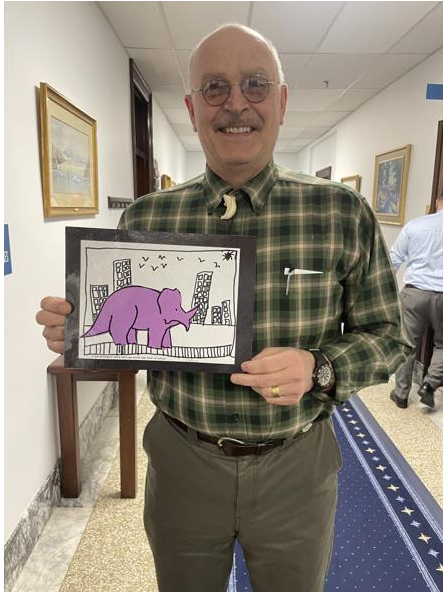
April 24th from 5:00-6:30 pm at Golden Heart Plaza

Listen to community members speak about the importance of education for our community. Enjoy music from Eielson music students while engaging with various community groups:

- Great Alaska Schools
- Golden Heart Strong
- Coalition for Education Equity
- Pension reforms
- Fairbanks Children's Museum

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Legislative Updates



L: Sen. Click Bishop proudly receives art from a UPark kindergarten student. | R: Rep. Will Stapp is glad to display in his office art from Tanana Middle School students.

After the legislators failed to override Governor Dunleavy’s veto of SB 140 by a single vote, NEA-Alaska Board members met with legislators across the state to find common ground and discussed ways to move forward with education funding. **A special THANK YOU to Senators Bishop and Kawasaki and Representatives Stapp, Carrick, and Dibert for their “Yes” vote to override the veto.** Their vote gives me confidence that we will adequately fund education with an increase to the BSA. HR 392 is an education bill being discussed and contains many provisions similar to HR 140. Stay tuned.



L: Rep. Ashley Carrick holding art from a West Valley art student | R: Rep. Maxine Dibert receiving art created by two Ben Eielson students.

I enjoyed sharing artwork from students across our school district with our interior Senators and Representatives. All were happy to receive these gifts. I hope they help those in Juneau connect with “home” and the constituents they represent - both now and their future voters.

If you are ready to turn your anger into action, please take this short [survey](#) and let us know what actions you are ready to take. Your input will guide our next steps.

NEA-Alaska Supports Coalition for Education Equity



**COALITION FOR
EDUCATION EQUITY
OF ALASKA**

The NEA-Alaska Board of Directors approved an initial investment of \$100,000 to support a lawsuit against the State of Alaska for their failure to maintain a system of public schools. This contribution is being made to the Coalition for Education Equity (CEE), who has spearheaded similar efforts in the past.

While we are still in the early stages, and no suit has been filed, this represents a major commitment by our association to compel the State of Alaska to uphold its constitutional obligation. CEE is actively seeking additional partners to join in this effort and will be reaching out to

school districts, Alaska Native Corporations, and other school employee organizations for additional funding.

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.

CPR Training - One Spot Left!



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 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.

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Why Your Contract Matters - Give Yourself a 1% Raise

SCAN ME



FairbanksEducators.org

Article 112

403b SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

The District will match employee's contributions up to 1% of your annual salary. If you want to cash out personal or sick leave, you must notify the payroll department no later than May 1st. - Article 112

Compensatory time can be converted to personal leave and then contributed to your 403(b) accounts. - Article 523

A. All teachers may contribute up to the cash out value of their personal leave annually at their per diem rate, up to \$350. Teachers may contribute half days.

B. Tier III teachers may contribute up to three (3) sick leave days annually at their per diem rate, up to \$350, according to the following guidelines:

1. Once a Tier III teacher has accumulated 100 hours of sick leave, the teacher may request to cash in one (1) day of sick leave to contribute to a 403b.
2. Once a Tier III teacher has accumulated 200 hours of sick leave, the teacher may request to cash in two (2) days of sick leave to contribute to a 403b.
3. Once a Tier III teacher has accumulated 300 hours of sick leave, the teacher may request to cash in three (3) days of sick leave to contribute to a 403b.

C. Teacher salary contributions

Teachers may make individual contributions to the 403b supplemental retirement accounts governed by the

IRS limitations that exceed the 1% match provided by the District.

Annual requests to cash out personal and/or sick leave must be received by the payroll department no later than May 1st of each year.

Sick Leave Bank Donations

Per the Negotiated Agreement, resigning or retiring FEA bargaining unit members may contribute up to six (6) unused sick leave days to the Sick Leave Bank.

If you are resigning or retiring this year, I hope you will consider donating days to help the colleagues you leave behind.

The donation form can be found on our website here: [FEA Sick Leave Bank Donation Form](#)

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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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.

FEA Retirement Celebration



FEA is holding its annual retirement dinner party for members. It will take place Friday, May 10th at Pike's.

Retirees will be invited to attend as guests of honor and will receive a complimentary dinner.

All other colleagues and family members are invited to attend.

Colleagues are encouraged to share a few words on behalf of our retirees.

Please donate items for our auction - individual, business and school donations are all welcome.

Please contact Kristen Dullen (kristen.dullen@k12northstar.org) with donations or questions.

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.

Gratitude and Thank You



Thank you to Senators Bishop and Kawasaki, and Representative Dibert, Stapp and Carrick for their YES votes in support of SB 140 and education funding;

Thank you to our Ben Eielson staff for making the finals days for students engaging and positive as they themselves charter uncertainty and navigate challenges themselves.

Thank you to everyone supporting our military students and staff as we celebrate month of the Military Child and Purple Up in April.

Upcoming Events & Important Dates



- **Saturday, April 6th at 10:00 am at FEA Offices**
SPED educator meeting in person and virtually
<https://uso6web.zoom.us/j/81623553710>
- **Monday, April 8th at 5:00 pm at FEA Offices**
PACE Committee interviews Borough Mayoral candidates - all are welcome
- **Tuesday, April 9th at 5:00 pm at FEA Offices**
FEA Building Rep. meeting
- **Tuesday, April 16th and Wednesday, April 17th**
FEA early-enrollment and building visit
- **Tuesday, April 23rd at 5:00 pm at FEA Offices**
FEA Board of Director's Meeting
- **Wednesday, April 24th at 5:00 pm at Golden Heart Plaza**
#FbxEdFest
- **Saturday, April 27th at 9:00 am at FEA Offices**
CPR Training

- **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: Coby Haas, 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!

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