

FEAback

By Danette L. Peterson • Oct 10, 2023
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President's Message: Looking Ahead, Let's Talk About Educator Voice.

The local elections that took place on October 3rd were crucial to our school community. I thank you for getting to the polls and using your educator voices, and I thank you for encouraging colleagues, friends, and family to cast their votes. I am excited to continue working with our newly elected officials to further policies that benefit our members, students, and local community. A meet-and-greet for our newly elected School Board members will be held this month so please look for details so you can attend.

Having School Board members and Borough Assembly members that are committed to supporting public education and funding education helps tremendously. Funding doesn't solve every problem, but it sure helps—especially in light of the budget projections that were shared at the last school board meeting. I'm also pleased that Mayor Ward vetoed the education reserve fund, Borough Ordinance 2023-53, sponsored by Jimi Cash and Aaron Lojewski. Yes, there is a need to address education funding, but it must be done in a way that provides stable and predictable funding that matches the needs of the school district and is not at the whim of the stock market.

We are planning to share our educator stories once the new Borough Assembly members are sworn in and seated. We want them to understand why full funding is so important and how a lack of funding impacts our classrooms and students. If you have a story to share about a lack of technology, staffing shortages, materials or technology lacking, needed building repairs, or how virtual instruction and services are impacting your students, please let us know so we can share those stories and advocate for full funding at the local level. We will be sharing those stories on Thursday, November 9th along with ESSA and FPA members.

If you enjoy using your educator voice, please let us know by filling out [NEA-Alaska's Educator Interest Card](#). Maybe you want to improve the lives of colleagues and advocate for retirement with a defined benefit ([SB 88](#)); maybe you want to talk to legislatures about increasing the BSA; maybe you want to talk about the Alaska Reads Act and how it impacts your students; maybe you want to be the voice for your SPED students who are receiving virtual services because our District can't hire enough professionals. Whatever it is, we need your voice. If you are interested, but not sure how to get started or what to say, we can provide the needed training. We can make a difference, and I am committed and certain that we will.

Educator Certificate "Lapses" & DEED

If you are an established educator renewing a certificate, emergency certificated educator, J1 visa educator, or moving from an initial to a regular five-year certificate, you might have noticed that DEED is backlogged. If you need help negotiating an extension with our District's HR or navigating the many pieces involved, please reach out if you haven't already. Let us know what your situation is and what support you need. We can help you communicate with HR to avoid being placed on sub-pay or being terminated.

Healthcare Information



Healthcare enrollment is open this month and closes on October 31st. Please take time to carefully consider which plan is best for you and your family. Many of you will find that moving from Plan C to Plan B is a better option. If you would like further information about the differences between the plans, please feel free to reach out to the District's Benefits Department or American Fidelity. If you still need help sorting out the differences and what is best for you, please contact Michael Wenstrup, NEA AK UniServ Director and FEA bargaining team member.

FEA's Healthcare Committee representatives include David Devaughn, Jessica Iglesias, and Coby Haas. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement that is part of [our negotiated agreement](#), the Healthcare Committee will be seeking, researching, and implementing ways to reduce healthcare costs, which may include moving away from our current self-insured plans. The Healthcare Committee is scheduled to meet on December 7th to address this important work. Updates will be forthcoming as this work unfolds.

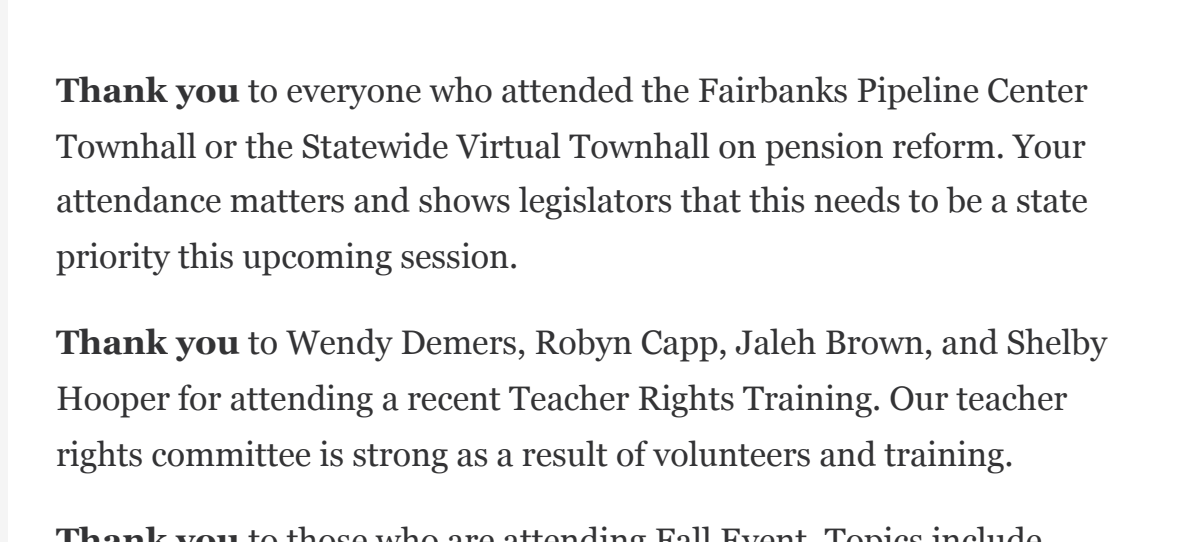
Alaska Reads Act Survey

NEA-AK has launched a survey regarding the Alaska Reads Act. This information will be used to have meaningful discussions with DEED and legislatures as well as inform how NEA-AK can support members. Please take a moment to [complete the survey here](#).

Support for Mandatory Trainings

FEA will host a drop-in session for educators needing support with the various mandatory trainings that are due at the end of the month. If you need some help or just want to place to work with colleagues, please stop by FEA Offices on **October 18th from 4:00-7:00pm**. Food will be provided.

Building Visit at Boreal Sun



Thank you to the staff at Boreal Sun for inviting me to their Fall Fest. The weather was beautiful and the soup was delicious! I also got to bring back to the office some wonder apple butter that was made by the kindergarten class.

If you have an event that you would like for me to attend, please reach out and send me an [email](#). I would also like to job shadow so I can better understand the daily work of our various members, so please send me an invitation for that, as well!

Policy Assembly & Delegate Assembly Elections

On Saturday, October 21st members of FEA will be participating in Policy Assembly. This allows our members to review and revise our policies and bylaws. If you are interested in attending, we will meet at Chinook Charter School at 8:30 a.m. Those participating in Policy Assembly may participate at NEA-Alaska's Delegate Assembly.

Once a year, elected delegates from across the state have the opportunity to gather at Delegate Assembly — NEA-Alaska's annual meeting to set the direction for the organization by way of resolutions, new business items, legislative priorities, and approving the organization's budget for the following year. This year NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly will open on the evening of Thursday, January 11, 2023, and it will adjourn late Saturday night, January 13, 2023.

FEA is eligible to send 27 elected delegates. **If you are interested in attending and serving as a delegate, please submit your name and a biographical statement of 50 words or less to FEA Vice President Patrick Frymark (patrick.frymark@k12northstar.org).**

Why Your Contract Matters: New Contract To-Dos

On Tuesday, September 5th, the School Board unanimously approved the Tentative Agreement that FEA had entered into with the District. With the approval of FEA voting members and the School Board, we now have a three-year negotiated agreement that covers July 1, 2023-June 30,2026. FEA and the District will now proofread and reformat the negotiated agreement to get it ready to be printed. Here's what you should do.

- On Friday, September 29th, all parties signed the negotiated agreement between FEA and the District. **Please print a copy at your home school.** The copy can be located on our [FEA website](#).
- **Article 102 Salary Schedule Movement:** Please complete the [Request for Salary Change form](#) and submit [official transcripts](#) to request movement on the salary schedule based upon credits or degrees earned prior to the first day of the semester, or if you previously earned a double bachelors simultaneously, double masters simultaneously, and/or doctoral degree. If you need official transcripts, please request those immediately in order to receive movement on the salary schedule for the entire year;
- **Article 606 SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT** states: *"When a special education teacher determines a student's safety concern interferes with their preparatory period or duty-free lunch, the special education teacher will immediately request assistance from the school administration. In accordance with Article 502, every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the missed time."*

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who attended the Fairbanks Pipeline Center Townhall or the Statewide Virtual Townhall on pension reform. Your attendance matters and shows legislators that this needs to be a state priority this upcoming session.

Thank you to Wendy Demers, Robyn Capp, Jaleh Brown, and Shelby Hooper for attending a recent Teacher Rights Training. Our teacher rights committee is strong as a result of volunteers and training.

Thank you to those who are attending Fall Event. Topics include support of our LGBTQ+ students, membership, and engagement. Some FEA members will also be attending a legislative training to help us use our educator advocate voices and speak to those in Juneau about the importance of a permanent increase in the BSA and Retirement with dignity. If you are interested in legislative action. Please reach out and [let us know of your interest](#).

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- **Representative Council Meeting & Policy Assembly Work Session**
Tuesday, October 10th at 5:00pm at FEA Office
- **Support for Mandatory Trainings**
Wednesday, October 18th from 4:00-7:00pm at FEA Office
- **Policy Assembly**
Saturday, October 21st at 8:30am at Chinook Charter
- **FEA Building Rep Training**
Saturday, October 21st at 1:00pm at FEA Office
- **FEA Board of Directors Meeting**
Tuesday, October 24th at 5:00pm at FEA Office

FEAback Classified Ads

All ads are run for two FEAbacks, 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

Retired 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, Kelly Scanlon

West Region: 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

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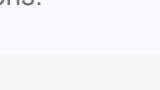
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Feedback

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

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