



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Nov 07, 2023

Smart Brevity® count: 8 mins...2172 words

Volume 42, Number 7

Included in this edition:

- President's Message
- Thursday, November 9th Testimony - Why Full Funding Matters
- #AKLEG Updates from NEA-Alaska
- Delegate Assembly Election
- Emotional Fitness Skills for Teachers
- Veterans Day Recognition
- Why Your Contract Matters
- Member Benefits
- Thank You and Gratitude!
- Save the Date and Future Events

President's Message

I recently found myself back in school while attending a training for new local presidents across the country. I certainly learned a lot, but I was most struck by the similarity of the issues facing educators regardless of location. The issues facing educators in Vermont were similar to those in Nevada, as they were rural to urban. I heard fellow educators talk about staffing shortages, a lack of prep time, and safety issues. At one point, an attendee had to excuse herself to take a call from a fellow educator who was being transported to a hospital after being injured by a student. (Fortunately, I have not had to respond to a similar call.) I also heard some creative solutions to some of these issues.

So, when 99% of Portland's 4,000 educators voted in favor of labor action and went on strike last week, we could have guessed most of the reasons without reading a news article — inadequate planning time, increasing class sizes, compensation that has not kept up with inflation, large SPED caseloads, unsafe student behaviors, and unsafe conditions such as rodents, temperatures, and mold.

Although the specifics differ, the same general topics were discussed during our recent bargaining sessions. So, why should we care about the educational conditions in Portland, or anywhere else for that matter? First, as educators we cheer collectively when the conditions of students improve regardless of the location. That's why we are in this business, after all. Second, gains made in compensation, benefits, planning time and other work conditions in one part of the country help set the benchmarks and industry standards in other parts of the country. When locals bargain, their teams research and strategize based upon what other locals statewide and regionally are negotiating. (By way of example, in 2019 FEA was the first local in Alaska to negotiate for a matching 403(b) contribution. Since then, many locals across Alaska have been able to negotiate similar matching 403(b) benefits into their contracts.)

I feel very grateful to be a part of an association that has a strong history of membership and engagement. We are the experts on what is happening in our classrooms, with our students, and with our colleagues. We have used our voices to make a difference not only in our

own buildings but within our profession and for those who will follow in our footsteps. So, if you are not a member for FEA or have not yet used your educator voice to advocate for the schools students deserve, I encourage you to do so. By advocating for what is and is not acceptable in public education, you help set the standards across the country. And, even if you only plan to stay with our district a short time, by setting higher standards here you will likely be improving conditions in the next district that you move to.

With sincere gratitude, thank you for all that you do each and every day.

Buildings with 85%+ FEA Membership

- Administrative Center
- Anne Wien
- B.E.S.T.
- Barnette Magnet
- Boreal Sun
- Bridge Program
- Career Education Center
- Chinook Charter
- Denali
- Hutchison
- Lathrop
- North Pole High School
- Pearl Creek
- Randy Smith Middle School
- SMART Program
- Tanana

- Ticasuk Brown
- Two Rivers
- University Park
- Watershed
- West Valley
- Woodriver

Thursday, November 9th Testimony - Why Full Funding Matters

This Thursday three new Borough Assembly members — Scott Crass, Liz Reeves-Ramos, and Nick LaJiness — will be seated. These members campaigned on a message of full funding for our local school district. Many of your fellow FEA colleagues, alongside ESSA and FPA members, will be sharing their educator stories about how a lack of funding has impacted their classrooms and their students. Maybe your story is about a lack of equipment, virtual services for SPED students, large class sizes, or the impact of subbing shortages.

This is *not* about blaming the District for a lack of funds — the District has to maintain a balanced budget and can only spend what it receives. This event is about helping to educate and remind our Borough Assembly members about the importance of local funding. Please be a voice for students and share your personal message or one on behalf of your educator group. Call 907-459-1401 to add your name for in-person testimony on non-agenda items or [click here](#) to sign up to testify telephonically.

If you can't attend this event, please consider providing [written testimony](#) instead, and please let us know of your [interest](#) for future advocacy opportunities.

#AKLEG Updates from NEA-Alaska



As the legislative session gears up and talk increases about BSA (base student allocation) and Retirement Reform, please stay in the know. If you are a member who is not receiving NEA-Alaska President Tom Klaameyer's newsletter #AKLEG Update, please email Alex Strickland at alex.strickland@neaalaska.org so we can ensure you receive these important updates.

Elections for Delegate Assembly 2024

Elections are now open for additional FEA delegates to attend NEA-Alaska's 2024 Delegate Assembly. Delegate Assembly is 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.

Please check your personal email for your ballot and vote for your colleagues to do this important work. If you don't see a ballot, please check your spam or promotions folders. If you still can't find it, please contact Alex Strickland at alex.strickland@neaalaska.org or call our office at 907-456-4435.

Elections close at 11:59 p.m. on November 21st.

Upcoming Emotional Fitness Skills for Teachers Webinar — How Are You Doing with Your Self Care?



On November 9th, Nataly Kogan, author of *The Awesome Human Project*, is hosting a FREE Emotional Fitness Skills for Teachers webinar.

She says, “I think of teachers as everyday heroes. Every day, they bring their selves, their knowledge, compassion, patience, insights, and deep care to their students. They literally dedicate themselves to fueling our future, and they often have to deal with so many challenges as they do it (from budget cuts to impatient parents).”

“I’ve had the gift of getting to know many teachers, especially during and after the pandemic. And it struck me how much of themselves they continue to give through their work while often feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and frankly, exhausted.”

“So I want to do what I can to help them. During the webinar, I will share several emotional fitness skills and simple ways that busy teachers can practice them to reduce stress and fuel their energy.”

The webinar takes place on **Thursday, November 9th at 3 p.m. Alaska** time but those who can't attend in person will receive a recording. [Click this link](#) to register and engage in some self-care.

Veteran's Day Recognition and Appreciation



Saturday, November 11th is Veteran's Day. I want to thank each of you who has served our country as a member of the armed services. We enjoy certain freedoms because of the sacrifices that our veterans have made, as well as the sacrifices their families make so they can serve.

I also want to recognize our current military-affiliated educators who are a part of our school community and serve our students. Some of these educators are veterans themselves, others are family members of veterans, and others are family members of those who are actively serving our country. Our school communities certainly appreciate all that you do and we are so grateful to have you join us, even if only for a few years.

I also want to give a big shout-out to our JROTC instructors. They are preparing many of our students to be the next generation to honorably serve our country. Thank you.

- **Ben Eielson: Kathryn Manning**
- **Lathrop: Peter Bonin and Phillip Maxim**
- **North Pole High School: Bradley Spilinek**
- **West Valley High School: Carlos Cruz and Travis Walker**

As a token of our gratitude, FEA is providing lunch at our military-affiliated schools on Friday, November 10th. Please help us recognize and celebrate the military-affiliated educators and staff in your buildings.

If you are a military-affiliated educator, please [click here](#) to let us know.

Why Your Contract Matters — New Contract Language When Subbing For Colleagues

Pursuant to Article 602:

“When a teacher supervises a class during their normal preparation time (as provided in Article 502) the teacher will receive compensation at the per diem rate, paid to the nearest quarter hour.”

This compensation was previously paid at the hourly rate of B+0.

“In the event a substitute employee is not available and a teacher has to provide coverage to at least half of another teacher’s students in addition to their current class, the administrator will provide the teacher with additional duty-free time or an additional ½ per diem for the time the student supervision was required.”

The prior contract did not offer monetary compensation for this situation, only reasonable efforts to provide the teacher with additional duty-free time.

Member Benefits

The logo for NEA Member Benefits is displayed on a blue rectangular background. The word "nea" is written in a white, lowercase, serif font, with a small emblem inside the letter 'a'. To the right of "nea", the words "Member" and "Benefits" are stacked vertically in a white, italicized, serif font.

If you are traveling for the upcoming holidays, check out the member discounts on car rentals, hotels, airfare and attractions at [NEA Member Benefits](#).

Thank You and Gratitude!



I am so thankful for each and every one of you who engages in FEA so that we can better advocate for students and colleagues, and be the voice of our profession. Each of us working together is what gives FEA strength and gives us a seat at the table when important conversations are being had and to have a voice on various District committees.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Educator Advocacy Training on November 1st with Matt Moser from NEA-Alaska. Each of us can Speak Up for Students and our profession in whatever way feels comfortable — a letter to the editor, emails to school board members, going to Juneau to talk to legislators, and more.

Thank you to those who could attend the swearing-in ceremony of School Board members Tim Doran, Bobby Burgess, and Meredith Maple or swing by FEA for our meet-and-greet. I look forward to working with our School Board members as we advocate for funding and what is best for students.

Thank you to our EETS Committee Members who will meet later this month: Rachel DeTemple, Natalya Carlson, Kelly Scanlon, Wendy Demers, Jen Frymark, and Melanie Bieniek.

Thank you to Pepper McFarland for attending Ben Eielson's Career Fair and talking to students considering education as a career.

Thank you to the North Pole Middle School staff for visiting with me prior to the start of their Parent-Teacher Conferences.

If you have an event that you would like me to attend, please send me an [email](#).

Save the Date and Future Events

- **Wednesday, November 8th at 5:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**

Teacher Rights Committee Meeting

- **Thursday, November 9th at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Assembly**

Testimony on Why Full Funding Matters

- **Tuesday, November 14th from 5:00-6:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**

FEA Representative Council meeting

- **Saturday, November 18th from 10:00-11:00 a.m. at FEA Offices**

SPED Committee Meeting

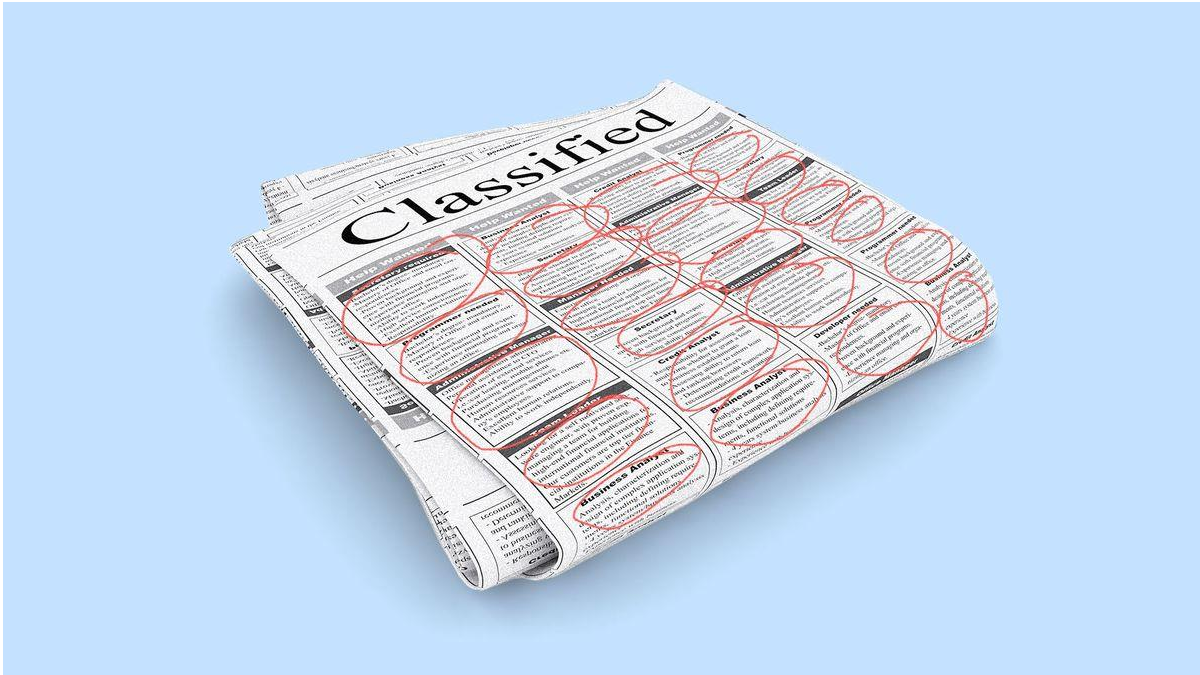
- **Tuesday, November 21st at 11:59 p.m.**

Delegate Assembly elections close

- **Tuesday, November 28th at 5:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**

FEA Board of Directors Meeting

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 newsletter. Your responses will help us create better content for you!

Was this edition useful?



[Click here to unsubscribe.](#)

This newsletter is powered by

AXIOS HQ

Like this email style and format?

It's called Smart Brevity®. Hundreds of orgs use it — in a tool called [Axios HQ](#) — to drive productivity with clearer workplace communications.

This email was sent by NEA Alaska via [Axios HQ](#)