



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Nov 21, 2023

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The holiday season is upon us. It means different things to each of us. For some, it means a trip back home to visit with family. For others, it means preparing for guests. For many, it signifies a time for reflection and gratitude.

Brene Brown says that “practicing gratitude invites joy into our lives.” Or to put it another way, she says, “it’s not joy that makes us grateful, it’s gratitude that makes us joyful.” According to her, it’s a practice, an action, and not a mere attitude. The practice may involve journaling, keeping a gratitude jar, or saying something aloud each day that we are grateful for.

I have tried to practice a bit of gratitude in each FEAdback. I am truly so grateful for each member that contributes something to our organization. Levels of engagement vary but they all matter. Even attending social events to share companionship and camaraderie helps build connections and strengthens our association.

Sometimes people will ask what FEA is doing about an issue. What they are truly asking is what *I*, the FEA President, am doing about it. But I am just one tiny piece of the FEA Family. Like every successful organization, there are many unsung heroes that are vital to our success. In particular, I am very grateful for those who serve on the FEA Board to help lead our organization, and for our building reps who have been so involved and engaged this year. Thank you to those members who serve on an FEA or District advisory committee and ensure the educator voice is heard when decisions are being made. I couldn't do this job without our staff and state support. Lastly, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with our school administrators, School Board members, and Borough Assembly members to ensure students and families have the schools that they deserve. What are you grateful for? In addition to family and loved ones, you may find that you are grateful for a bit of extra time this weekend, along with your colleagues and students.

During this holiday, I encourage you put work aside for a few days to connect with family, friends, and loved ones — and please find time for yourself, as well. Calendar in a walk through Creamer's Field, enjoy a good book with your favorite tea, or do whatever helps you engage in self-care. May those activities provide opportunities for gratitude and invite joy into your life this holiday season. Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving weekend.

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

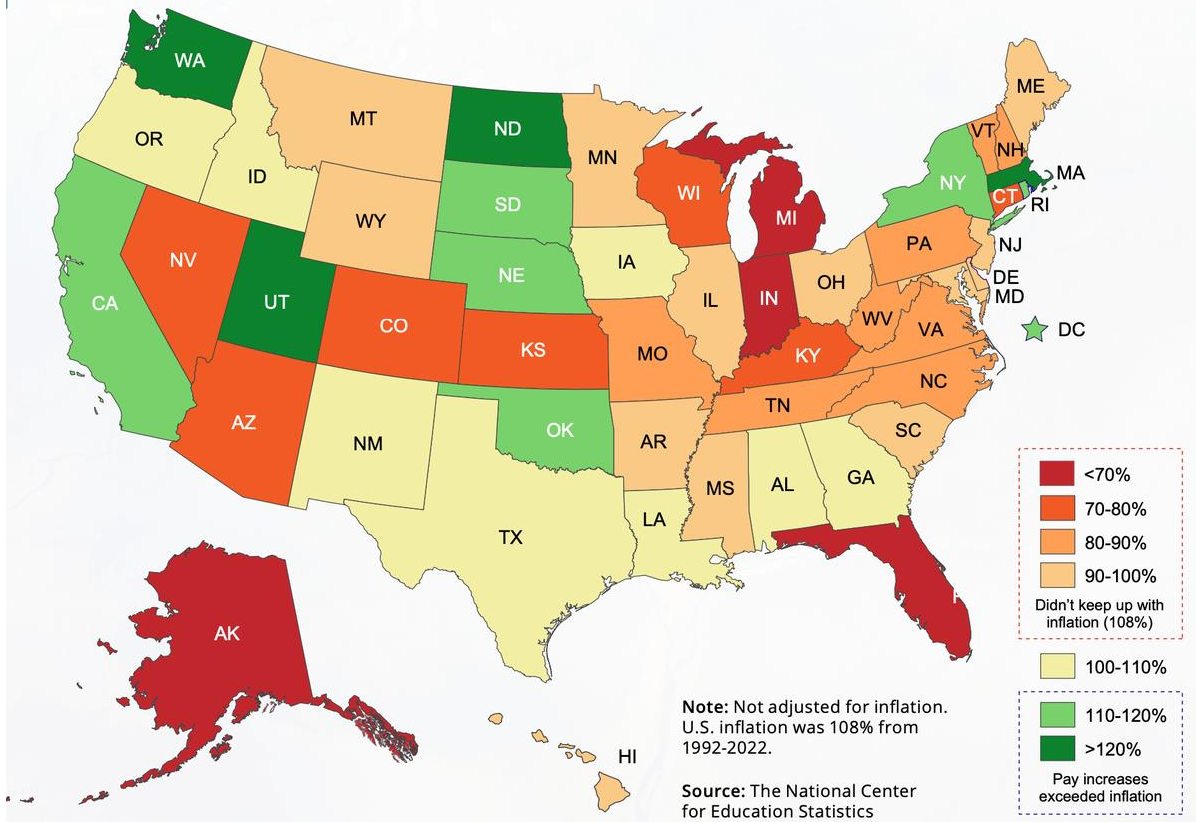
Elections for NEA-Alaska's Delegate Assembly close today at 5 p.m.

A big shoutout to those members who are willing to give their time and energy to serve as delegates at our annual meeting as we set the priorities and agenda for the organization and approve the organization's budget for the upcoming year.

Please take a moment at the end of your day to vote for your fellow FEA colleagues. Our organization's strength comes from member engagement. Our union is not complete without "u" and "i".

EDUCATION REPORT ON TEACHER PAY

Growth in teachers' wages by state from 1992 to 2022



In the November 9th edition of the NEA-Alaska AKtivist, NEA-Alaska President Tom Klaameyer addressed Governor Dunleavy's staff attempt to suppress a report focused on teacher pay. Attempts to hide the facts have only shed light on the stark realities that we already know. President Klaameyer wrote,

“[The report](#) has since been leaked to various media outlets and contains data that many of us have known for years:

- Teacher pay has fallen drastically over several decades, so much so that Alaska no longer holds the competitive advantage in hiring educators it once had
- Adjusted for inflation, Alaska teachers' wages have actually *fallen* 4% over the past 20 years

- More teachers are nearing retirement than we have young educators to replace them with
- Alaska remains the only state without any type of defined benefit retirement system

This report is important, not only for its policy implications but for helping the public understand the issues we've been advocating for in Juneau. In addition to contributing to incomplete presentation of the issues, stifling public discourse, and perpetuating misperceptions of the needs of educators and the students they serve, this intentional suppression of unbiased facts also further erodes the trust we are asked to place in the government and impedes in the constitutionally mandated provision of a public education for every child in Alaska.”

If you are a member who is not receiving NEA-Alaska President Tom Klaameyer's newsletter #AKLEG Update, please [email Alex Strickland](#) so we can ensure you receive these important updates.

SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY-AFFILIATED EDUCATORS



FEA is working to find ways to better support our military-affiliated educators. If you are a military-affiliated educator, please let us know and reach out to us by [clicking here](#). Soon, we hope to announce the formation of our FEA military-affiliated educator group.

DEED BACKLOG

The screenshot shows the header of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development website. On the left is the department's logo, which features a hand holding a star within a circular seal. To the right of the logo, the text reads "Alaska Department of Education & Early Development". Below this is a horizontal navigation menu with the following items: "HOME", "PARENTS & STUDENTS", "TEACHING & LEARNING", "FORMS & GRANTS", and a partially visible "P". Below the navigation menu is a breadcrumb trail: "ABOUT DEED" | "STATE OF ALASKA > DEED > TLS > TEACHER CERTIFICATION >". Below the breadcrumb trail is a large blue banner with the text "Teacher Certification" in white.

Yes, Alaska's Department of Education and Early Development is unquestionably experiencing a significant backlog and is far behind on processing applications for recertifications as well as emergency and

initial certificates. The backlog is a result of a number of factors. It's a statewide issue affecting educators across the state. Don't panic. Plan ahead and submit your paperwork in advance. Communicate with the District's Human Resources staff about delays as they arise. It has been my experience helping many of you work through this process that communication is key. If you have done your part and the delay is attributable to DEED, the District's HR Department has been quite easy to work with. That said, the responsibility to submit the needed application and supporting documentation rests with each educator. If you have questions, I encourage you to reach out for assistance.

FESTIVE FUN WITH FEA MEMBERS



Are you ready to engage in some creativity and holiday spirit? Expressions in Glass is hosting a group workshop for FEA members. Create beautiful fused glass birch trees with colleagues on **December 14th at 4:30 p.m.** **The cost of the workshop is \$45.00 and food will be provided by FEA.** Let's gather, create, and celebrate. [Click here](#) to register for the workshop. (Please note that the items will be placed in the kiln after the workshop and will be ready for pick-up on Saturday, December 16th.)

WHY OUR CONTRACT MATTERS



What if my flight is delayed during the holiday season?

Article 304 of our negotiated agreement provides,

- *“When a teacher is on a personal trip outside of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and his/her return to the Fairbanks North Star Borough is delayed by transportation difficulties beyond his/her control, no disciplinary action may be taken against the teacher. The burden shall be upon the teacher to establish that the delay was beyond his/her control. The teacher's absence under these circumstances will be charged to personal leave. If the teacher has insufficient personal leave to cover the absence, the time will be charged to unpaid leave.”*

Get your personal leave request in now for the holidays.

Article 303 of our negotiated agreement provides,

“Except in emergencies, teachers shall give at least twenty-four (24) hours advance notice to their immediate supervisors of their intent to be absent on paid personal leave which shall be approved or denied in a timely manner. In order to assure continuity of the educational program, principals may deny requests for paid personal leave if the number of teachers requesting such leave for any day exceeds fifteen percent (15%) of the teaching staff in any one (1) building.”

THANK YOU AND GRATITUDE



Thank you to Ladd Elementary for inviting me to your Veterans Day celebration. I enjoyed seeing student artwork celebrating Veteran's Day throughout the District.

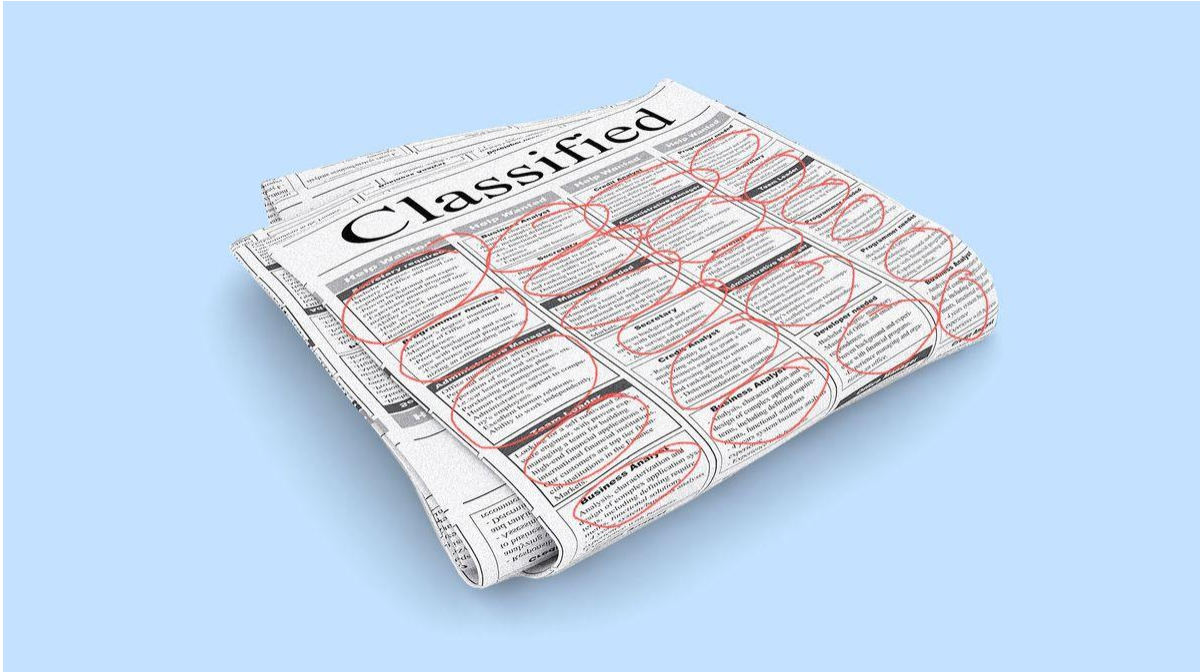
Thank you to Chief Warrant Officer-5 (ret.) Carlos Cruz and Staff Sergeant Travis Walker for inviting me to their wonderful 248th Marine Birthday Celebration. I thoroughly enjoyed connecting with colleagues and some of my former students. It also gave me the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by my late grandfather who served in WWII and others who also sacrificed for our country.

Thank you to Pepper McFarland, Joseph Rueters, Wendy Demers and Jasmine Nickels who Stood up for Students by testifying before the Borough Assembly on November 9th and speaking about the impact of funding cuts on our students and in our classrooms.

Thank you to all of our dedicated building reps who serve as the vital link between each building and our FEA leadership. You help bring matters to light, explore possible solutions, and share information with colleagues.

If you aren't sure who your building rep is, please reach out to FEA.

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: include classified ad in your subject line.***

FEA MEMBERS SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Help FEA Members support each other during the holiday season.

If you have crafts or holiday goods to sell, [please let us know](#) and share them with others.

- **Honey and Kimchi**

Honey = \$25 a pound (comes in 1 or 2 lb. containers), kimchi = \$ 25 per 1 quart jar.

Please contact Garrett Armstrong at garrettarmstrong86@gmail.com, 907-87-3900

- **Raven's Eyes and Ook-Wicks**

Raven's Eye: large and small \$20.00 Ook-Wicks: \$100.00

The Ook-Wicks are made with driftwood and beads from various places. However, if you have a plethora of beads or necklaces that you no longer use but treasure, send me pictures of what you have, and we can discuss ideas. I can take those treasured pieces and create an Ook-Wick for you. Prices would vary, and I do have diamond willow that I can use as well.

Please contact Laverne Haakanson at 907.388.5653

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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