



FEAdback

By Danette L. Peterson • Dec 07, 2023

Smart Brevity® count: 8.5 mins...2308 words

Volume 42, Number 9

Included in this edition:

- **President's Message**
- **Sick Leave Bank**
- **Showing Up for Students - Interior Legislative Open House**
- **Delegate Assembly Elections**
- **Donations to the Door**
- **Military-Affiliated Educators**
- **Festive Fun with FEA Members**
- **Why Our Contract Matters**
- **Donations for the Door**
- **Thank You and Gratitude**
- **Classifieds**
- **Save the Date**

President's Message: 'Tis the Season for Giving

I was recently talking to a group of educators who were discussing the sustainability of our profession and their concerns about retaining new educators. Yes, we often hear about recruitment efforts, but retention efforts must also be addressed. Approximately 44% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. In general, newer teachers are 2-1/2 times more likely to quit than those who are tenured. While the answer to what contributes to this high rate of exodus is complex and multifaceted, much of it relates to a lack of support.

We often ask our newest educators to do some of the hardest jobs in our schools. They may have to travel between multiple sites. They are often assigned to multi-grade classrooms. They are often assigned to teach remediation classes to students at risk. And, they are often the teachers who are involuntarily reassigned to new classrooms or buildings and asked to teach unfamiliar grades or content at the beginning of the school year due to student enrollment. Back in 2006, as a new teacher, I was assigned a cart instead of a classroom. I roamed the hallways of DeKalb High School bumping into students and staff as I pushed my cart through crowded halls during the passing periods, maneuvering from one room to another encroaching upon the classroom of the teacher who was on his or her planning period. I didn't have a bulletin board. I didn't have my own desk. I couldn't rearrange student desks in ways that suited me. I never felt settled as I lived as a professional nomadic high school social studies teacher. It certainly didn't set me up for success. I survived despite those obstacles; as the newest teacher in the department, this was just expected. It just *was* because it had *always been that way*, not because it was best for me or our shared students.

We certainly don't throw similar obstacles in the way of others new to their professions and hope that they manage to swim rather than sink. Pilots work their way from being co-pilots or second engineers to captains or pilots in command. Doctors aren't given the hardest surgical procedures to master without a supervising surgeon standing by their side guiding them every step of the way — they work their way up with support and guidance. Lawyers don't graduate from law school and then immediately take on the defense of a person charged with a capital crime — the system doesn't even *allow* it, and requires a certain level of experience and expertise before representing clients when the stakes are literally life and death.

As we implement changes within our profession to make it more sustainable, while keeping in mind what is best for students, I ask you to consider ways to help support the early career educators in your building. Sharing a lesson plan or summative assessment tool can feel like a gift of time and lessen the burden that is taking a physical toll. Offering to make copies on your way to the copier can provide a few extra minutes breathing room. Stopping by with a cup of coffee or eating lunch together can let that teacher know that they are not alone in their struggles. Sharing a story about your failed attempt at something new may build trust and community based on the knowledge that we are all in this together and here to support one another.

One of the most cited reasons for educators leaving the profession is a lack of support. Yes, systemic changes need to occur and that might feel beyond your capacity. But each of us can support our early career educators through acts both big and small.

So I ask you, in this season of giving, to find ways to support each other, and in so doing you will be supporting our students and our noble profession.

Sick Leave Bank



I am proud that FEA's negotiated agreement with the District contains an option for members to join a sick leave bank. It provides something akin to an insurance policy for those unexpected and unfortunate moments — the unexpected fall that results in a broken leg, the car accident, the diagnosis that requires extensive medical treatment, etc. It has also enabled members to recover from planned surgeries and stay home with newborns for the first six weeks without being on unpaid leave. Without the sick leave bank, many members would face unfortunate circumstances on unpaid leave. It is a voluntary sick leave bank that provides security and equity and only requires a draw as needed, as opposed to others that have an annual draw.

If you are retiring at the end of this year, please remember that you can donate up to 6 of your accrued sick days.

**Showing Up For Students — Interior
Legislative Open House Today**



The legislative season is getting underway. The interior legislative offices are hosting an open house today, December 7th from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. The interior legislative offices are located at 1292 Sadler Way, across from the Home Depot. Many members received some training and talking points Monday night so they could talk to our state legislators and be advocates for our students. If you are interested in showing up for students and being an advocate, please share your passion with us by [clicking here](#). No one can share your classroom story better than you can.

Delegate Assembly



A big shout-out and Congratulations to the following members who were recently elected as delegates to the upcoming delegate assembly. They were elected for a two-year term and will serve in our state-wide Delegate Assembly January 11-13, 2024.

Karen Dullen Hannibal Grubis

Becky Freeman William Voelkerding

Garrett Armstrong Julie Lougee

Nicholas Graves Julian Tate

Africa Beaty Lisa Villano

Patrick Cromer Denise Newman

Raymond Virg-in Genevieve Chacho

Delegates who were elected last year and will also be attending and representing you are:

Shelby Hooper Paula Addis

Robyn Capp Dave Devaughn

Patrick Frymark LaVerne Haakanson

Kimberly Hughes Pepper McFarland

Hannah Murray Kelly Scanlon

Melodee Sonnenberg Kim Wallingford

Jessica Iglesias Kristen Dullen

Thank you to everyone who took the time to vote — your participation matters and strengthens our organization — and a big thank you to these delegates who are representing all of us at the state level.

Delegates will also be participating in a state-wide rally on **Saturday, January 13th** to raise awareness about the need to increase the BSA (Base Student Allocation). **If you have friends or family in the Anchorage area who can attend the rally, please share the information with them and ask them to register using the QR Code above or following this link: bit.ly/Red4EdRally**

FEA Military-Affiliated Educator Group

FEA is forming a group which will help support our military-affiliated educators. If you are a military-affiliated educator or want to help, please let us know and reach out to us by [clicking here](#).

Festive Fun with FEA — December 14th



JUST THREE SPOTS REMAIN SO DON'T WAIT.

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 **Thursday, 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

SCAN ME



FairbanksEducators.org

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*

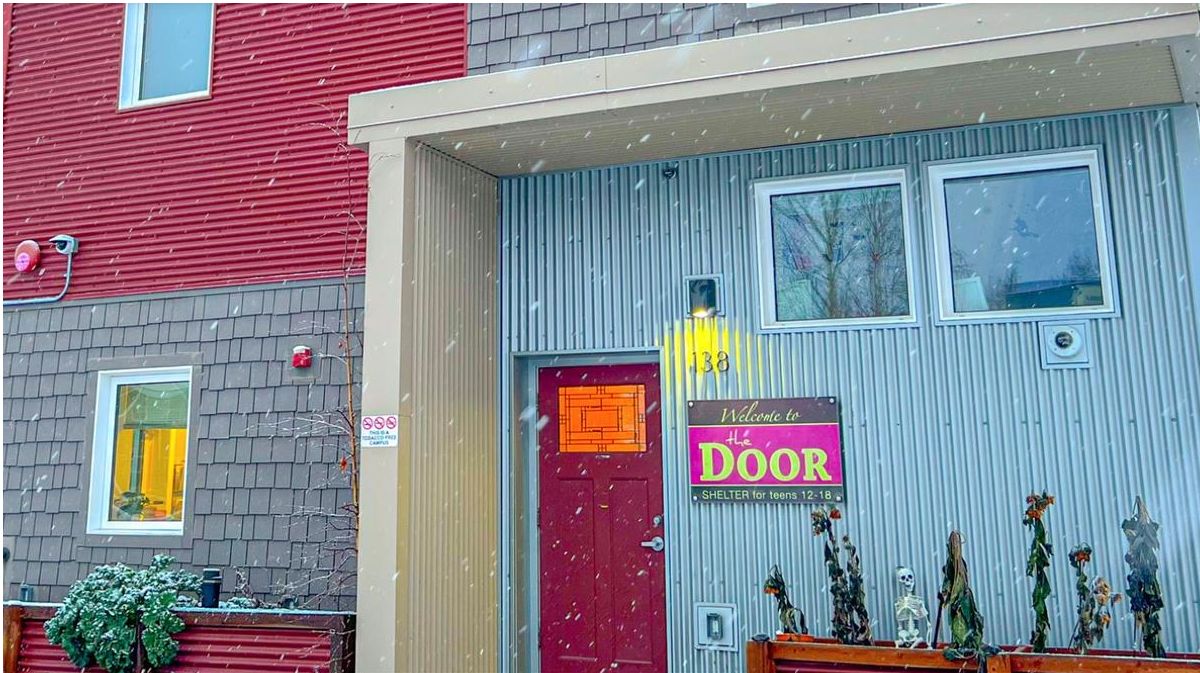
circumstances will be charged to personal leave. If the teacher has insufficient personal leave to cover the absence, the time will be charged to unpaid leave.”

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.”*

Donations for the Door



If you are traveling this holiday season and happen to have acquired extra shampoo, lotion, mouthwash, lip balm or other toiletries, please consider dropping them off at our FEA Offices. The Door is also currently requesting the following items:

- Hygiene products and toiletries

- New socks and underwear
- New or gently used winter gear
- Phone blocks and chargers

We will donate those needed items to The Door. The Door provides vital services to so many of our students and this is such an important and easy way for us to give just a little back to them.

Thank You and Gratitude



Thank you to Grier Hopkins, Kristen Dullen, Karen Dullen, and others who donated food, helped unload boxes at the Food Bank for Thanksgiving, or volunteered in other ways to care for our local community during the holidays.

Thank you to Liz Alexander for inviting me to her Speech and Debate class to teach about Robert's Rules and parliamentary procedure. It was such fun and felt great getting back into the classroom.

There are so many events coming up in the next couple of weeks. Please reach out and [invite me](#) to your school event. I will be sure to attend as many as possible. I love connecting with you and our students!

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

- **Tuesday, December 12th at 5:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**
FEA Rep Council Meeting
- **Tuesday, December 19th at 5:00-6:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**
FEA Board of Directors Meeting
- **Friday, December 22nd - Monday, January 1st**
NEA-Alaska Offices Closed for Winter Break
- **Monday, January 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at FEA Offices**
Delegate Assembly Information Meeting
- **Thursday, January 11, 2024 - Saturday, January 13, 2024**
Delegate Assembly in Anchorage

FEA Members Supporting Each Other
with Holiday Shopping



Please help FEA Members support each other during the holiday season.

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

- **Crochet stuffed animals, hats, blankets, etc.** \$5-\$40
erikamarshal@yahoo.com or facebook page: Crochet by Erika
- **Prints and cards of Alaskan birds.**

These are made as a collaboration with my daughter Claire Granger. I make botanical contact prints and Claire uses the prints as the canvas for painted birds. I also make Moravian 3D star ornaments out of handprinted papers.

Prints \$50, cards \$6, card set of 4 for \$21. Nearly 20 birds to choose from.

Text Becky Hammer: 9074604603

...and More!



- **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 or 907-987-3900

- **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

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 and 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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