

Nov 5, 2019 Elections

The elections of November 5, 2019, were historic here in Virginia. Not only did the General Assembly switch to a Democratic majority for the first time since 1996, but Fairfax County's two governing bodies were substantially reconstituted. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has four new members, with Jeff McKay moving from Lee district to Chair, and four returning school board members are welcoming eight new members.

School Board Members

Returning

Karen Corbett Sanders (Chair)
Karen Keys-Gamarra
Tamara Kaufax
Megan McLaughlin

New

Ricardy Anderson
Laura Jane Cohen
Karl Frisch
Rachna Heizer
Melanie Meren
Abrar Omeish
Stella Pekarsky
Elaine Tholen

We welcome them all!

What is also very significant is that FEA-R and GRT members were highly active and an important part in assuring these outcomes.

FEA-R members participated in the interviews of the candidates, voted on endorsements, filled out postcards, made

Nov 5 Elections (continued)

phone calls, attended forums and house parties, and walked neighborhoods for candidates in both the primaries and the general election. We also donated to the FEA PAC-fund and to individual candidates.

You, the members of FEA-R, made a difference in making sure we had the best possible members of Fairfax governing bodies, and in the NoVA cohort of legislators. Congratulations on a historic effort.

Great thanks go out to Barbara Allen, Chair of the GRT, and Mimi Dash, Vice President and long-time activist in FEA-R for their leadership and coordination.

Now, to working with them in assuring our schools and county are well-provided for and administratively supported to be positive learning and working environments for our children and active colleagues. (See the FEA-R Legislative Agenda on page 3) Thanks for Everyone's hard work!

Join us for FEA Retired Lobby Day January 30

All retired teachers and education support persons are invited and encouraged to travel to Richmond and visit with our Northern Virginia legislators on Thursday, January 30, 2020. Don't feel that you must be an expert on "issues" to qualify as a retiree lobbyist. Learn what we do, and why we do it. We ALL need to "advocate" for retirees, actively employed educators and those who are "yet" to be employed as educators.

If you are interested, please come to our meeting on Thursday, January 9, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. at the FEA office in Fairfax to learn a little more about our agenda, or please feel free to contact Barbara Allen at 703-978-0470 or Barbarawallaceallen@yahoo.com and come along on the Lobby Day trip. It's fun!! (See bus travel plans on p. 2)

Let's Advocate!

Government Relations Team Review

Winter Edition

Northern Virginia and Fairfax County, in particular, have continued to ride the BIG BLUE WAVE since our successful elections two years ago. And, on Election Day, November 5 of this year we were able to elect more candidates than was actually necessary to "flip" the majority in the State Senate and the House of Delegates from Republican to Democrat. It has been more than twenty years since the Democrats have had a majority in both Houses of the Virginia Commonwealth's Legislature.

Why is this important?

As educators, the reason that this is important is the fact that Democrats generally have been (and can be expected to continue to be) much more supportive of increasing benefits for school employees, increasing teacher salaries, maintaining the Virginia Retirement System, providing health benefits, and providing a high quality environment in our schools for teaching and learning. SO, as our legislators are creating the language to support the bills that will be introduced during the 2020 General Assembly Session, they are looking at the long term outcome of what their legislation can provide, and how it will shape the future development of programs that will provide new technology, social services to communities in need, and more equitable learning opportunities for all of our students.

On, December 12 and 13, the GRT was host to 15 of our Senators and Delegates (or their Legislative Aides) from Fairfax County at our annual lunch and breakfast to discuss the issues that we feel are important to all educational retirees and to share those with our legislators. We have found that in the last several years as we have transitioned from visits with individual legislators to meeting in larger group situations, we are learning what is important to their constituents and how those needs and issues relate to us as educators. It is a large community and the needs are many!

FEA-Retired

3917 Old Lee Highway,
Fairfax, VA 22030
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FEA-Retired Council 2019-2020

Cheryl Binkley, President
Mimi Dash, Vice President

Barbara Allen	Larry Armentrout
John Duncan	Linda Corcoran
Michael Hairston	Leon Haynie
Tricia Heininge	Marlene Parker
Dave Thomas	Stella Worley
	Walt Mika, Emeritus

Continued from p. 1, column 3, Lobby

At the breakfast “event,” there were members of our retiree groups that had never attended before and had not been a part of the valuable discussions that can happen when the legislators are actually “listening” to experienced educators and we in turn have an opportunity to hear some of their solutions and possible

Maybe this is the year, 2020, that you should consider coming to Richmond for our Retiree Lobby Day on January 30! Yes, you have to get up early, but once or twice a year isn’t too bad. There is a place on the bus waiting for you!

Details for 2020 Lobby Day

Final planning meeting for Lobby Day will be Thursday, January 9, at 10:00 at the FEA office building. Group leaders and Team members will be finalized. Appointments with General Assembly members will be completed.

BUS RIDE DETAILS

Our bus will have three pick-up points as we travel to Richmond.

Bus Stop #1 is the parking lot at the Fair Oaks Mall in between poles 55 and 58. The Mantech Building can be seen from that part of the parking lot, but is not ON the Fair Oaks Mall property. The bus will leave this area at 6:00 a.m.

Bus Stop #2 is the parking lot of the Little River United Church of Christ (UCC) at 8410 Little River Turnpike. It is across from NOVA Community College in Annandale. To access the parking lot of the church, turn left on Lake and follow the long driveway to the parking lot. The bus will leave Little River UCC at 6:30 a.m.

Bus Stop #3 is the parking area around the Cracker Barrel just off Rt. 95 at 17115 Dumfries Rd., Dumfries. The bus will leave that area between 6:50 and 7a.m.

We will be dropped off at the Pocahontas Building in Richmond at 8:30 and will visit with our Legislators through the morning. Lunch is available across the street at the Sun Trust Bank Building. The bus will be picking up our members around 2 p.m. and will return to all stops made in the morning.

If you need more information or would like to attend Lobby Day, please contact Barbara Allen at 703-978-0470 or by email Barbarawallaceallen@yahoo.com

By Barbara Allen, Govt Relations Chair

2020 VEA-Retired Elections

VEA-Retired elections will take place in January 2020. The procedures and terms of office have changed for officers and council members. All elected positions will be for 2 year terms beginning August 1, 2020 and ending July 31, 2022.

Elections will be held for President, Vice-President, 2nd at-large board member, and representatives from the 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 Congressional Districts. We will also be electing retired delegates who will also serve 2 years to the 2020 and 2021 conventions. Petitions were handed in by Dec 13, 2019.

Elections will be held January 22-24, 2020, via electronic ballot. (Be sure FEA and VEA have your current email address. Send it to Sylvia Avila at savila@fairfaxea.org. You may request a paper ballot from Samantha Crouse at VEA, 116 S. 3rd St., Richmond, VA 23219 or call (800-552-9554) before Jan 6.

FEA-R has several members who are running for re-election as Council members. Dennis Pfennig is running for President-Elect. Kathy Davis is running for re-election in District 8, Cheryl Perry is running in District 6, and Marlene Parker is a candidate for District 10.

Be sure and Vote!



Annual Spring Luncheon May 5

Cinco de Mayo at FEA

You are cordially invited to attend the annual FEA-R Luncheon featuring a speaker of interest to all. In addition, there will be a delicious catered lunch and time to network and reunite with old friends! **We invite you to bring a retired guest who had been an FEA member and may be interested in joining FEA-R and participating in its varied activities. There is strength in numbers when we lobby the Board of Supervisors and the School Board!!**

Tuesday, May 5, at NOON
Cost: \$15

Send your check payable to: **Fairfax Education Association** to Sylvia Avila at FEA, 3917 Old Lee Hwy, Fairfax, VA 22030 to reserve your space.



Happy New Year 2020



Mark Your 2020 Calendar!

- FEA-R Council**—Tue, Jan 7, 10am -Noon, (FEA Office)
- GRT (Lobby Day Planning)**—Thu, Jan 9, 10am -Noon (FEA Office)
- VEA-R Online Voting**—Noon, Jan 22-Noon, Jan 24
- Lobby Day**—Thu, Jan 30 FEA-R, & Mon, Jan 27, Richmond (VEA)
- FEA-R Council**—Tue, Mar 3, 10am -Noon, (FEA Office)
- VEA Convention**—March 26-28, Hampton
- FEA-R Luncheon**—Tue, May 5 (FEA Office)
- NEA-R Annual Meeting**—June 29-30, Atlanta, GA
- NEA Convention**—July 2-6, Atlanta, GA

**Government Relations Team
Position Statement
for the 2020 General Assembly Session**

ON BEHALF OF ALL NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S RETIRED EDUCATION EMPLOYEES, WE SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. Fully fund the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and maintain it as a defined benefit plan without any other option.**
 - a. **IMPLEMENT** VRS actuarial recommendations, including continuing to fully fund the Board Certified Contribution Rate to VRS.
 - b. **OPPOSE** all efforts to erode the VRS retirement plan, and move to reverse action taken that created the hybrid plan.
- 2. Provide equity for ALL education employees, bringing them to the level of benefits provided to state employees in comparable positions.**
 - a. Appropriate increases from state funds, NOT from local revenues.
 - b. Provide health insurance credit to all educational support professionals (ESP).
- 3. Passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.**
- 4. Legislation to promote gun violence prevention.**
- 5. The constitutional amendment to support non-partisan redistricting.**

IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR ACTIVELY EMPLOYED COLLEAGUES, RETIRED EDUCATORS ALSO CALL ON LAWMAKERS TO:

- 6. Commit to providing a high quality environment for teaching and learning.**
 - a. Attract and retain highly qualified educators.
 - Recognize the importance of professional autonomy for practitioners and provide avenues for their input.
 - Maintain the current continuing contract.
 - Reinstate the three person fact-finding panel.
 - Restore a three year probationary period for new teachers with access to due process after the first year.
 - Significantly improve educator salaries.
 - b. Continue to examine and evaluate the frequency of and dependency on high stakes testing.
 - c. Promote a teacher evaluation system that uses multiple measures, reduces reliance on standardized test scores, and reflects a teacher's effectiveness and growth.
 - d. Oppose voucher and tax credit plans for private and home K-12 Education.
- 7. Commit to rights of educators to negotiate their salaries and working conditions through an official process jointly developed by the localities.**
- 8. Fully fund Department of Education recommended SOQ mandates, including significant reductions in class size, attention to providing a safe learning environment, and revision of the funding formula to more accurately reflect the needs of all localities.**
- 9. Oppose charter school amendments and private efforts to impact curriculum and/or any attempts to divert public dollars to non-public schools.**
- 10. Support equitable learning opportunities for all students, including improving infrastructure, providing technology, and supporting wrap-around community services.**



Greetings Fellow Retirees,

I hope this newsletter finds you and yours healthy, safe, and doing well.

No matter how you look at it the 2019-20 academic year will go down in history as an exceptional one for all of us in Education and in FEA-R, both in terms of remarkable accomplishments and monumental challenges.

- FEA-R was very active in historic gains, both at the Northern Virginia and state level:
- Electing more pro-education candidates than ever at both the county and state levels
- Restoring long held rights such as collective bargaining and three (3) person panels
- Gaining ground regarding long depressed funding for schools; and
- Even helping Virginia become the final state needed for passage of the ERA.

Though COVID-19 has suspended funding gains, other policy changes will remain, and there is still hope we will avoid extreme austerity as the country recovers.

As with most organizations during this time, FEA-R is adapting to the necessary changes in how we do things.

Meetings have either been postponed, gone to phone, become digital, or have been altogether cancelled. We do continue to monitor retiree benefits and policies with FCPS HR, even under COVID-19 circumstances.

The big news is that our Spring Luncheon has been postponed and will be Virtual. Details are in column two.

Cheryl Binkley

A Picture Tour of Two 2019-20 Events

As a commemoration of the year, here are two links to photos of some of our times together. Hope to see you all on-line June 9, and in-person soon. Click or cut and paste into your browser to see the photographs from Lobby Day 2020 and the 2019 Spring Luncheon.

Lobby Day 2020: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/FuZW9BBc58fJ2BVy9>

Spring Luncheon Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/YBKAh7oS4ZQbQhKV8>

If you have photos you are willing to share, please post or send them to Cheryl Binkley at cheryldgb@gmail.com for our FEA-R albums.



Annual Spring Luncheon Meeting Noon, Tuesday, June 9 Over ZOOM With Guest Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn



You are cordially invited to attend the annual FEA-R (Virtual) Luncheon.

Our Keynote speaker will be Virginia House Speaker

Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn

the first woman Speaker in the history of Virginia

We invite you to spread your own lunch to enjoy while we meet virtually.

We will open the Zoom call at 11:30AM to enable candidates for FEA-R board to present their candidacy and for friends to network and reunite with old friends before the luncheon begins at 12 (NOON).

Attendees are welcome to invite a retired guest who had been an FEA member and may be interested in joining FEA-R. Please only invite FEA members.

When you RSVP, you will be sent an email Zoom invitation with clear and easy instructions on how to join the call with your computer, tablet, or phone.

RSVP by filling out the: [GOOGLE FORM](#)

or visit: <https://bit.ly/3di0yM7>

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Walt Mika, *Member Emeritus*



FEA-R Council Election Petitions due by June 7, 2020

Three FEA-R seats are up for election in 2020. These two-year seats are currently held by Mimi Dash, Tricia Heininge and Larry Amentrout, who are all eligible for re-election should they choose to run.

FEA-R members interested in running should return the petition below along with their 75-word statement **by June 7**.

The council meets every other month on a Tuesday beginning in September and takes a holiday in the summer months. Candidates will have an opportunity to present their candidacy at the annual luncheon meeting on June 9.

Statements of Intention and 75-word statements can be sent via e-mail to the FEA office to: Sylvia Avila at savila@fairfaxea.org

2020 FEA-R Council Statement of Intention

Intent form **MUST** be complete, or it will be invalidated.

Name as you wish it to appear on ballot Email Address

Home Street Address, City, State, Zip

I hereby request to have my name included on the ballot for election to the FEA-R Council for a term of two (2) years to commence September 1, 2020, and to terminate August 31, 2022

Legal Signature

Date

Election to the council will also include FEA-R's endorsement should a winning candidate wish to seek election as a retired member to the VEA and/or NEA Annual Conventions.
A 75 word maximum statement of reasons for election must accompany this petition.



***Congratulations and Welcome
to our new members of the
FEA/VEA/NEA-Retired this year!***

Alan Anderson, Leonard Bumbaca, Elva Card,
Lynette Curran, Amy Darger-Stewart, Karen Fowler,
Geraldine Henryhand, Diane Hughart, Barrett Kashdan,
Agnes Mallard, Loretta Monaco-Stevenson, Alice Murbock,
Janice Pry, Debra Scott, Stephen Shook, Lynda Vincent,
Joyce Wainwright, and Eytan Welicker

Resources:

FEA/VEA/NEA-Retired Member Benefits

◆ **NEA Member Benefits**

<https://www.neamb.com/>

◆ **FEA Legal Service Program**

<https://fairfaxea.org/resources/legal-services/>

Stay Healthy, Informed and Save!

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Marlene Parker	Dave Thomas
Adrienne White	Estella Worley

Walt Mika, *Member Emeritus*

Elections November 3

Be an Education Voter

Virginia has elections every year. This year is mostly focused on the Presidential and Congressional elections.

Next year we will elect the top three Virginia offices and the House of Delegates.

In spite of pandemic restraints, it is critical that everyone vote this year in our Presidential and Congressional elections.

Here is the Virginia Board of Elections site to find the locations and hours of early voting in your district. Or you can vote at your regular polling place November 3.

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/early-voting-office-locations/>

Be sure to turn over your ballot— They are two sided and there are several bond and amendments issues.

To see which candidates have been approved by Virginia Education Association go to <https://www.veanea.org/vea->



FCPS Benefit Open Enrollment October 15-December 7

Each year, FCPS provides a window of opportunity to review your benefit elections and make decisions about what might be the best option for your unique situation.

Open Enrollment opened on October 15 and ends, December 7. Elections for changes to your plan must be made during Open Enrollment and become effective January 1, 2021.

By now, you should have received a mailing from FCPS containing a statement of your proposed plan enrollment for 2021. Review your selections. If you have no changes, you don't have to do anything else.

However, you may want to go to the FCPS Retiree Benefits website and review details of this year's plan. Though there are not substantial changes to this year's coverages, every year the providers have what they consider minor changes but ones that may affect your particular health needs. Such as a \$50 cap on insulin co-charges, and approval of acupuncture for back pain. (*see the individual plans for details*)

You will definitely want to access the Fairfax County Public Schools Retiree Open Enrollment website. That is where you will find 2021 premium rates, changes to plans like copays and new benefits details, and paperwork for any plan changes you would like to make. That site is <https://www.fcps.edu/index.php/benefits-open-enrollment-for-retirees> Links to benefit vendor sites are also available from that page and are the quickest way to access benefit-related information.

Questions? Call your benefits plan provider (Aetna, Kaiser, CareFirst, etc.) Use the Customer Service number on the back of your insurance card or contact Human Resources at 571-423-3000 or via HRConnection@fcps.edu.

2020-2021 Calendar

All meetings and events are virtual until conditions change

FEA-R Council Meetings at 10:30 AM

September 14, 2020

November 10, 2020

January 12, 2021

March 9, 2021

May 4, 2021

(Prior to All Member Luncheon)

FEA-R GRT

Government Relations Team

October 13, 2020

October 27, 2020

January 12, 2021

Legislative Brunch and Lunch:

December 8, 2020

(TBD by Legislators calendars)

FEA Holiday Celebration:

December 18, 2020

VEA-R Election forms due: Dec 13

FEA-R/VEA Lobby Day: Week of January 25, 2021 Virtual and Times TBD by Legislature schedules.

VEA Convention: March 29-Apr 2, 2021 (Location: Virtual)

FEA-R All Member Luncheon, May 4

NEA-R Annual Meeting: TBA

NEA Convention: July 2-6, Denver, CO

Annual Dues Reminder

If you renew your retiree dues annually, please remember to send your dues payment to the FEA Office.





Staying Connected

The FEA-R Council has managed to continue most of its work through Zoom, e-mail and good old-fashioned phone calls. Which raises the need for **everyone** to update and make sure we have your complete phone, email, and address information. With office support on limited hours from the pandemic it is important that we switch more completely to digital communication as much as possible. This will also enable us to make contact via e-mail as changes in dates and plans occur. **Please update your email and phone information by sending your full contact information to savila@fairfaxea.org. Also please indicate on your update if you would like to receive e-mail notices of meetings and zoom links to attend.**

Honors Appointments and Farewells

At the June 2020 meeting we elected officers and welcomed new council members. We will miss **Larry Armentrout** who is stepping back from the FEA-R Council this year, and welcome **Adrienne White** who joins us. **Michael Hairston** has graciously agreed to serve as Vice-President and we are delighted that **Mimi Dash**, the immediate past Vice-President will remain as a council member. And I am honored to be continuing as the Council President for another year.

We are well represented at the state level with Dennis Pfennig continuing to serve as VEA-R President, and representing us on the VEA Legislative Committee. Serving on the VEA-R are also, Cheryl Perry, Marlene Parker, and Kathy Davis.

Cheryl Binkley and Marlene Parker have been appointed to serve on the NEA-Retired Legislative Committee.

Many thanks to all those who serve!

To learn more about the VEA-Retired, visit: <https://www.veanea.org/membership-benefits/our-members/vea-retired/>

Resources:

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◆ NEA Member Benefits

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◆ FEA Legal Service Program

<https://fairfaxea.org/resources/legal-services/>

**Stay Healthy, Informed
and Save!**

Legislative /GRT News

Though the pandemic special session of the Virginia Legislature has put most of the budget gains we garnered in the 2020 session on hold, non-budget achievements like collective bargaining and restoration of the 3 person panel remain intact and moving toward implementation. We also continue to monitor and be ready to address any retiree benefits issues that might arise.

The joint GRT of FEA-R and FCRE continues to develop and plan our Legislative Priorities and Lobby actions for 2020-2021.

Shirley McCoy, Pamela Ward, Estella Worley and Connie Dineen have been acting as a sub-committee to help us navigate the legislative year, and David Thomas, Miimi Dash, Marlene Parker, and Cheryl Binkley have been charged with developing the Legislative Priorities for 2021 Legislative Session for approval. We are grateful to Barbara Allen, who continues to capably coordinate and guide the group.

The GRT welcomes all members who would like to participate. If you would like to help FEA-R protect and put forward the needs of our retirees and our schools, please e-mail Barbara Allen at barbarawallaceallen@yahoo.com

*Honorable Mentions: Two of our own featured in the Virginia Journal of Education, The magazine of the Virginia Education Association, VEA-Retired Spotlight in the October 2020 issue **Larry Armentrout** and in the November 2020 issue **John Duncan**.*

2020 Managing through The Virtual Year

It is most important to say, we the officers and members of the FEA-Retired Council hope you and yours are all safe, healthy, and faring well during this time. Although all our lives have been changed by the pandemic and the changes in day to day living have been at times difficult for us all, we hope you have found ways to do well and be well during this global crisis. May the coming holidays also be filled with connections and caring even as we adapt.

Cheryl Binkley

