

Do you ever wish you could do something to have a positive impact on the attention education receives, to help out your school, and to improve your compensation and benefits?

If so, mark February 25th on your calendar and come out to the Marriott Hotel for the mayoral/school board candidate forum, co-hosted this year with APEA affiliates.

Consider what happens when the candidates look out on a room packed with people who came because they care about education issues? They realize that education has to stay a top priority.

Also consider that AEA will go to the table next year to bargain a new contract. Having supportive school board members is a must.

On the other hand, if the candidates see a room half full, they may get the impression that educators are not engaged in education issues and that they do not need to be responsive to them.

Right now there are a large number of candidates running. To make a good choice, get past the commercials and sound bites, it is important that all teachers become informed regarding the candidates and make sound choices when they cast their votes. For the size of our city, Anchorage has unusual access to candidates and elected officials. Let us use it to help all candidates know we are watching and we vote.

We'll have an open time for any of the candidates to be available to chat with our membership one-on-one. We will have refreshments and a snack buffet line. If you have something you would like to say or like to ask, this is a perfect moment; education is the topic of the night. After the informal period, there will be a section where all the candidates are asked specific questions relating to their position on education issues.

The forum is one of several steps that AEA uses in a process to decide if and who to endorse in these races. If you have questions about that process, email AEA-PACE Co-chair Andy Holleman at [andyh@anchorageea.net](mailto:andyh@anchorageea.net) .