

Building a Movement for Our Future

Covid-19 has upended everything — our way of life, our schools, our workplaces and our economy. But there is one thing that has not changed: FEA members' dedication to their jobs, their students and their communities.

As part of the Fund Our Future Bus Tour (see page 8), FEA officers met with educators, parents, administrators and members across the state. They gave away free books and read to students at several schools, including Lake Trafford Elementary in Immokalee (below).

Welcome! We're happy you're here for the start of another school year and would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your choice to be part of Florida's public schools — and part of the largest union in the Southeast.

During this pandemic, the power of a union — of individuals working together for the greater good — has never been more clear. Our union members have been in the forefront, demanding safe learning and working conditions for Florida's students and educators.



Regardless of how you deliver lessons and services to Florida's students, you can take pride in the fact that you are doing great work — some of the most important work there is.

As teachers and education staff professionals, we are focused every day on improving the lives of our students. You have always been heroic, and you became the real heroes for our students and families during this pandemic. You stepped up to deal with the coronavirus school closures to meet not only the educational needs of our students, but the nutritional and emotional needs in new and creative ways. Your work helps build a better future for us all.

While our communities recover from the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic, our neighborhood public schools are at the center of this recovery. Public education is the bedrock of our students' and communities' future success. Together, we will build even stronger schools.

That's where the Florida Education Association (FEA) comes in. The information in this booklet will help you learn more about your local union and the FEA — and why becoming an active member is an important part of your personal and our collective success.

Statewide, our members continue to advocate for and shine a light on the needs of public education through the Fund Our Future campaign. (See page 6.) United, we continue to bring about positive change for public schools, for our students and for everyone who has dedicated their professional lives to educating young people.

FEA is made up of nearly 150,000 teachers, education staff professionals, higher education faculty and graduate assistants, students, and

retirees dedicated to providing the best possible education for students in Florida's public schools.

As union members, we remain united by:

- ▶ **Power:** This year members demonstrated time and again the importance of united action. From organizing for the well-funded schools our students deserve to pushing to keep those schools closed and our students safe when Covid-19 hit, our members proved what great things we can achieve by working together as one union. (See page 4.)
- ▶ **Purpose:** Whether we drive a bus, teach science, serve meals or counsel children, we are all part of a great educational village, with students at the center of everything we do. (See page 18.)
- ▶ **Potential:** Public education in this state faces numerous problems, with insufficient funding and a lack of resources at the top of the list. With our voices and our votes, we can shape the face of public education in Florida, ensuring a brighter future for our students, schools and educators. (See page 30.)

When we combine our power, purpose and potential we are strong. And our students and parents depend on us — especially in times of disruption — to use that strength to protect and improve Florida's public schools.



Speaking with a united voice, we call for the resources and autonomy needed to unlock every student's full potential; we fight for fair wages, safe working environments, affordable healthcare and retirement security; we strive to protect academic freedom and demand respect and dignity for all educators. After all, we are the experts.

For these and so many reasons, your membership matters. Your local union and FEA give you the ability to grow as a professional, and to make an even greater impact on the lives of students and at your school. Together, we will stand up and speak for our students, schools and educators.

We're all looking forward to a great school year. We are in this together!

"On January 13th, I will be on the steps of the Old Capitol, and I will be looking out at a sea of red," FEA President Fedrick Ingram promised to reporters at an Oct. 28, 2019 Tallahassee press conference, part of the Fund Our Future Bus Tour. That promise came true (above) as he welcomed the more than 15,000 public school supporters who marched on the Capitol during the "Take On Tallahassee" rally.



Fedrick Ingram
PRESIDENT



Andrew Spar
VICE PRESIDENT



Carole Gauronskas
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Collective Action

There are two kinds of power: organized money and organized people. Organized money has been going after public education for nearly three decades. We have to change that — we *are* changing that.

Being active in your local union answers the question, “What can we do about it?”

When we band together in numbers too great to ignore, we ensure our students have the vibrant classrooms, safe schools and bright futures they deserve.

FEA members are part of a bold national movement of educators and parents fighting for world-class public schools for our students. And we’re seeing the results from our members taking action:

- ▶ State lawmakers made a down-payment in education funding, increasing the base student allocation by \$130 per student over the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions.
- ▶ In 2020, the Legislature approved nearly half a billion dollars to raise salaries for beginning and veteran educators.
- ▶ Lawmakers acknowledged the need for increased pay for all school employees, opening up a path toward future raises.

These wins — along with worksite and contract victories from Pensacola to the Keys — show the power of FEA members, a power they’re using everyday to make a better future for our students.



Fund Our Future



Our members are part of a mighty movement for our schools, and we are just getting started.

“Fund Our Future” is what happens when educators decide to rise up for their students, schools and colleagues. It is a rallying cry, a campaign and an ongoing popular movement in support of our public schools that has been joined by parents, faith leaders and community activists throughout Florida. It is what happens when teachers, education staff professionals, higher ed faculty and graduate assistants decide, enough is enough, and take action to create change on their own terms.

Our members are part of a mighty movement for our schools, and we are just getting started.

By the time 2018 drew to a close, Florida’s public schools had suffered a decade of disinvestment. The budget cuts of the Great Recession had never been made up. Nationally, we ranked in the bottom 10 states in education funding and in pay for educators and education staff professionals. An emphasis on

bonus schemes instead of real salary increases left Florida’s teachers slipping ever farther behind in national rankings on pay. Schools faced severe shortages of teachers, bus drivers, paraprofessionals and other critical employees. Districts lacked sufficient resources for students. Infrastructure needs went unmet, with some schools unable to repair roofs or replace broken air conditioners.

The situation had to change — for the sake of students, educators and communities. In 2019, the Florida Education Association launched Fund Our Future.

FEA leaders see Fund Our Future not as a one-off, one-year effort but as an ongoing movement to lift up public education. We are in for the long haul, and are demanding a “Decade of Progress” for our PreK-12 schools, state colleges and universities.

To reverse the decades-long attack on public education, Fund Our Future began with three fundamental goals. FEA called on lawmakers to:

- ▶ Invest in the success of our students
- ▶ Invest in public schools and institutions of higher education
- ▶ Invest in retaining and recruiting school, college and university employees

Now, even at this early stage, our movement has achieved real, measurable gains for students, educators and communities. We have put public education back on the political map in the state of Florida.

The Evolution of a Movement

Fund Our Future began as a plan. Powered by the actions of many united on behalf of public education, it has grown into a movement. Together and alone, tens of thousands of individuals have acted in a thousand ways since

early 2019 to achieve gains for our students and improve wages for school employees.

FEA members and our education allies have staged large, highly visible actions throughout the state — summits, rallies, walk-ins, informational pickets, news conferences. On Jan. 13, 2020, the Take on Tallahassee Rally drew 15,000 educators and public-education supporters to the capital city. There was even a Fund Our Future Bus Tour, with a highly visible red bus making stops in 34 counties.

Innumerable smaller-scale actions also have been crucial to the movement — writing letters to the editor, emailing and visiting state lawmakers, testifying to legislative committees, reaching out to parents, and recruiting pro-public school allies within our communities. In our local unions, members recruited colleagues to join us, leading to a surge in union membership that has made us even stronger.

A movement is the work of many. The sum total of their actions adds up to success. Here, we take a look at the major events that have moved Fund Our Future forward.

SPRING 2019: Getting the Movement off the Ground

March 4 Day of Action: Fund our Future launches with a Day of Action in districts statewide. Union members in 61 counties held events on that day, which was the eve of the opening of the 2019 legislative session. More than 3,500 teachers and education staff professionals participated in rallies, sign waving



and informational pickets. “We are united in delivering one message,” FEA President Fedrick Ingram said in advance of March 4. “State leaders must fund our future. They must invest in neighborhood public schools, invest in the success of our students, and invest in the teachers and staff who work in our schools.”

School Walk-ins: On April 17, with budget negotiations underway in the Legislature, teachers and school staff joined with parents and community allies for morning walk-ins at more than 300 schools in 41 counties, from Pensacola to Key West.

25,000 for Fair Educator Pay: FEA held an April 23 news conference at the Florida Capitol to deliver more than 25,000 petitions signed by educators and education allies demanding that Florida improve teacher salaries and end unfair bonus schemes.

Winning Increases for Students: As the 2019 session drew to a close, the Florida House and Senate agreed on a \$75 per-student increase to the base student allocation (BSA), an amount larger than the previous three years’ increases combined.

SUMMER 2019: Gathering Together, Enlisting Allies

Education Summit Brings Voices Together: On May 18, nearly 1,000 school employees, parents, education activists, and faith and community leaders united in Orlando for “Bringing Voices Together: An Education Summit for Florida’s Public Schools.” This would mark the first time supporters came together in a single location for a Fund Our Future-related event.

Nearly 1,000 educators, parents, education activists, and faith leaders convened at the May 18 “Bringing Voices Together” Education Summit in Orlando.

FEA President Fed Ingram opened the by event by challenging attendees to build a movement: “Along with the majority of people in Florida, we believe that public education is a fundamental good for this state and for the nation as a whole. But our neighborhood public schools are under attack — there’s no other way to describe it. If public education is going to have a future in Florida, it’s time for the people who care about our public schools to step forward and take control of the conversation.”



FEA kicked off the Fund Our Future Bus Tour at the 2019 Delegate Assembly in Orlando.

The 3,580-mile tour would make 78 stops in 34 counties — raising the call statewide that Florida must Fund Our Future by investing in our students and the public schools they attend. Read a day-by-day recap of the 5-week tour at:

 FEAweb.org/bustour

“We see this summit as the start of something big, a real grassroots movement that brings together many disparate voices for our schools,” FEA President Ingram said. “I want people to leave the summit knowing they have joined a team. I want us to realize our collective power.”

FALL 2019: Going on the Road to Reach Out

Statewide Fund Our Future Bus Tour : In the fall of 2019, the drive to consolidate support for our public schools became literal as FEA leaders took the movement’s message on the road with the Fund Our Future Bus Tour. The outreach effort was also a listening tour. The experiences and concerns shared by local members would have a direct impact on our unions’ actions going forward. The tour launched in Orlando on Oct. 18 and ended in the same city on

Nov. 23. In between, the bus crisscrossed the state, making stops from Pensacola to the Florida Keys. Local union leaders and members helped make the whole effort possible, pitching in to sponsor events. In all, the Fund Our Future Bus Tour made 78 stops in 34 counties, racking up 3,580 miles on the road.

Looking for a ‘Sea of Red’: The bus came to the courtyard of the state Capitol for an Oct. 28 news conference. President Ingram announced to gathered reporters that the tour would be followed in January 2020 by a mass gathering of educators and education supporters at the Historic Capitol. “This is a movement for our students,” he said. “On January 13th, I will be on the steps of the Old Capitol, and I will be looking out at a sea of red.”

Year of Activism Leads to “Year of the Teacher”: A day after Ingram’s call for a “sea of red,” Gov. Ron DeSantis began saying that 2020 should be the “year of the teacher.” Even before our bus rolled, he had announced an initial plan to increase teacher pay.



SPRING 2020: Taking our Demands to the Seat of Power

Educators, Parents 'Take On Tallahassee': On the eve of the 2020 legislative session, FEA members took our demands straight to lawmakers with the Jan. 13 Take on Tallahassee Rally, which drew more than 15,000 educators, students, parents and public education supporters to the steps of the Old Capitol in Tallahassee. President Ingram's vision of a sea of red "for ed" was made real. Our members had traveled to Tallahassee however they could, with some rising well before dawn to make hours-long trips by bus or car. So many Polk County members elected to come that the Department of Education issued a warning of possible dismissals in advance of the demonstration. Hundreds of Polk educators attended the rally anyway.

The world heard our message that day. From Jan. 6 through Jan. 14, Take on Tallahassee garnered nearly 500 media hits nationally and throughout Florida.

Winning for Our Students: Our demands for better funding for our students and schools and higher pay for educators would continue to echo throughout the spring. Public education came out a winner in the 2020 legislative session, with a boost to the base student allocation, a raise for instructional employees and an end to unfair bonus schemes.

Lesson From Fund Our Future's First Year: Organizing Works!

Our accomplishments to this point stand as a testament to the strength of our united power and our movement. And it's early days yet on the path to change for public education.

Remember that our unions are calling for a Decade of Progress, with 2020 being the first of 10 years of improved funding for public education, improved pay for school employees and smarter education policy.

We are being heard — and making a difference. Since Fund Our Future launched in 2019, our voice has been crucial in bringing about significant change:

- ▶ State lawmakers made a down-payment



in education funding, increasing the base student allocation by \$130 per student over the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions.

- ▶ In 2020, the Legislature approved nearly half a billion dollars to raise salaries for beginning and veteran educators.
- ▶ Florida's governor made teacher pay a priority for 2020 and declared the "Year of the Teacher."
- ▶ Legislators voted down the failed Best and Brightest teacher bonus program in favor of actual salary increases.
- ▶ Numerous anti-public education bills were defeated or turned aside, including legislation directly targeted at our unions.
- ▶ Lawmakers acknowledged the need for increased pay for all school employees, opening up a path toward future raises.

Looking ahead, the coronavirus may slow us down, but it will not stop us. United, we are on the road to progress for Florida's public schools.

We will continue full speed ahead, on alternative paths if need be — accomplishing our goals through petitions, email campaigns, conversations with legislators and community members, socially distanced rallies and other means. Our voices will be heard.

And this fall, we will vote! (*see pages 20-21*). We encourage all members to request mail-in ballots, educate themselves on the candidates and vote in their own interest. We must elect candidates who strongly support public education — leaders who can be trusted do their best for our students, educators and public schools. Our future depends on it.

Demanding the funding our public schools deserve: More than 15,000 teachers, education staff professionals, parents, religious leaders, students, higher education faculty and graduate assistants, retirees, and students rallied outside the Florida Capitol on January 13, 2020. Watch videos and read a full recap at:

 FEAweb.org/jan13

Your Union

Your union is a member-driven professional organization that brings together teachers and education staff professionals like you looking to grow as educators. Members learn from and support one another.

Your union starts with you.

For many of us education isn't just a job — it's a calling. Becoming a member of your union is a foundational part of your drive for professional excellence.

As a professional educator dedicated to the future of public schools, you demand the most of yourself, your colleagues and your profession. Your passion and commitment make a difference.

You work every day to improve the lives of the students you serve and to help them reach their full potential.

You're a year-round advocate for your students, your school, your co-workers and your state.

Four million members like you make up the local, state and national organizations you become a part of by joining your local union. But it all starts with you.

**YOUR
LOCAL
UNION**

You've joined your local union to take ownership of your profession and have a voice in the decisions that affect your career.

Your local union is made up of talented, passionate and devoted public school teachers and education staff professionals — just like you.

It is a grassroots organization run by and for its members — who work together to make sure every student has access to high-quality public education.



Your local union is one of more than 100 local groups from Pensacola to Key West that make up the FEA.

Founded in 1886, the Florida Education Association is now the largest union in the state of Florida, representing nearly 150,000 teachers, education staff professionals, higher education faculty, graduate assistants, education students and retired educators.

FEA is proud to be your statewide union. Together we are the strongest voice for quality public education in Florida.



Florida is one of five "merged" states, meaning that FEA members belong to — and benefit from the combined resources of — both national education unions, with a combined membership of 4 million educators.

The American Federation of Teachers was founded in 1916 and today represents 1.6 million members in more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide.

The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, has 3 million members and affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.



Unity and solidarity! AFT, FEA and FEA-affiliated local unions are part of national, state and regional labor federations.

The AFL-CIO is the umbrella federation for unions in the U.S., with 55 unions representing 12.5 million working men and women. The Florida AFL-CIO unites more than 500 local unions and labor councils, representing more than 1 million workers, retirees and their families. Most FEA-affiliated local unions are also part of one of nine Central Labor Councils throughout Florida — regional bodies that connect workers from different trades, workplaces and cities.

What we accomplish by working together

Acting alone we can only do so much. But being active and engaged in your union gives you a powerful, collective voice about the future of teaching and learning. We know that we can affect real change when we come together and take collective action.



Below are just a few key ways union members work together to ensure opportunity, success and quality public education for our students.

Collective Bargaining

From wages to health insurance, performance pay to evaluations, nearly every part of our work lives is covered by the contract your union bargains with the district. Your local negotiating team is made up of dedicated members like you — and benefits from working closely with other FEA unions and FEA bargaining specialists throughout the year to negotiate a contract that promotes and protects excellence in our public schools.

Organizing for the Schools our Students Deserve

Our students are at the center of everything we do. Your local union and FEA fight for adequate funding, proper staffing and the resources educators need to unlock and inspire each child's natural curiosity, imagination and love of learning.

FEA leaders and staff work with local unions to build member capacity, leadership and, most importantly, power to demand and work for the schools our students deserve.

Locals and members from across the state are participating in FEA's Fund Our Future campaign (*see page 6*) and building local power through member-to-member organizing.

Working to Keep Students and Educators Safe During the Coronavirus Pandemic

As the Covid-19 crisis hit last spring, Florida's teachers and education staff professionals stepped forward as the experts on what students and educators needed. During uncertain times for the entire country, FEA members did what they always do: spoke up and spoke out for the educational, emotional and nutritional needs of our students.

In a school year like no other, members:

- ▶ Fought to keep school campuses closed through the end of the school year for safety
- ▶ Worked to keep the Federal School Lunch program running and students fed
- ▶ Called for and received an extension on teacher certificates and reading endorsement requirements, both through Dec. 31, 2020
- ▶ Worked to get their students access to internet and take-home devices for use in distance learning

Member-to-member organizing is at the heart of everything your union does. Becoming active in your union gives you a way to make a difference in the future of public education in Florida — and in the lives of your colleagues.



With Florida's schools closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, FEA members, leaders and staff never let up — they instead took their work for students and members online.

On April 21-23, FEA held a series of Regional Virtual Townhalls for members (photo compilation above). Local presidents discussed the work their locals were doing to keep students and members safe.

- ▶ Pushed for, and won, continued pay for educators and additional time to prepare for online instruction
- ▶ Won the suspension of punitive high stakes tests and teacher evaluations
- ▶ Moved to rapid online instruction to keep students, faculty and staff safe at public schools, colleges and universities
- ▶ Got flexibility for students with IEPs and English Language Learners

We didn't win everything we pushed for, but it was clear that our members' voices mattered. With every success we become stronger.

Member Advocacy and Representation

Every day, members work together to solve problems and address workplace issues big and small. FEA also protects your employment rights with both emergency and long-term legal services should you ever need them. Members can access the best and most comprehensive free legal program of any professional association in the state:

- ▶ **Legal Services Programs:** FEA provides legal services to members in employment-related legal matters — including

representation in certification actions brought by the Department of Education — in accordance with the Unified Legal Services Program (ULSP) guidelines.

- ▶ **Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Policy:** The EEL policy provides insurance coverage for members for incidents arising out of their employment. The policy generally provides:
 - ▶ Legal defense costs up to \$3 million per member per occurrence (not including civil rights claims/issues).
 - ▶ Liability coverage up to \$1 million per member per occurrence.
 - ▶ Liability coverage for civil rights claims/issues up to \$300,000 per member per occurrence.

The program also reimburses up to \$1,000 of a bail bond premium and up to \$35,000 in defense costs in criminal proceedings if the member is exonerated or the charge is dropped. If the criminal proceeding is the result of the use of corporal punishment, the reimbursement is made regardless of the outcome.

- ▶ **Attorney Referral Program (ARP):** The ARP helps members obtain personal legal services at a reduced cost. Administered through a national network of law firms, the program allows members to receive legal services at rates below their usual fees. Members are entitled to a free, 30-minute initial consultation with an attorney per program year and up to a 30 percent discount for legal work performed in many areas, such as family law, traffic matters, wills and estate planning, and criminal law.

The United Voice of Educators in Tallahassee

Very few Tallahassee politicians have spent time in front of a classroom, but they want to tell you how to do your job.

FEA members from every corner of the state are committed to the success of every child — and to using their united voice to demand the resources, class environments and learning

opportunities our students need to reach their full potential.

FEA maintains a vigilant presence at the Capitol, employing a team of full-time lobbyists who work with our member activists and legislators, to monitor, influence or change legislation that impacts our students and schools.

It will take some time for Florida to recover from a decade of financial neglect, but thanks to your action through the Fund Our Future campaign, lawmakers made a step in the right direction this session. Failed bonus programs like Best & Brightest have been repealed and the Legislature allocated \$500 million for permanent salary increases. Because of your activism, the governor's initial plan to only increase salaries for new teachers while providing bonuses to certain veteran teachers was soundly rejected by the House and Senate

Much work remains to be done. The looming budgetary crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic provides a convenient excuse for those who want to defund public education. However, as long as we remain united and speak with one voice, FEA and its members can ensure the financial investment in Florida's public schools made in the last legislative session is protected and expanded. Now, more than ever before, we have the opportunity to work with parents and community groups to demand our legislators provide the funding Florida's students and public schools deserve.

Spreading the Word

Your local union and FEA work to educate the public about the consistently good work of public school employees through media relations, press contacts, television and radio advertising, special events and other public relations activities. Through our redesigned website (FEAweb.org), social media platforms, action alert email and text systems, and magazine (*The Advocate*) and year-round media outreach, FEA warns the public when politicians in Tallahassee are harming schools with their policies. Due to the hard work of members through the Fund Our Future campaign, the FEA and our locals received more than 1,200 media hits in local, state and national press this school year.

A Statewide Commitment

In addition to the programs and services above, our FEA departments work daily with members and the more than 100 local unions and service units throughout the state.

- ▶ **Public Policy & Advocacy:** FEA's legislative specialists work to promote and pass good education policy — and defeat harmful legislation. PPA works with members statewide to elect pro-public education representatives.
- ▶ **Organizing & Field Services:** Local, regional and state staff work with local unions to bargain contracts, represent members, develop leadership, promote member benefits, recruit new members and build power.
- ▶ **Legal Services:** Provides members with a full range of emergency and long-term legal services. FEA's in-house attorneys help with everything from disciplinary actions to certification, retirement and disability disputes.
- ▶ **Information Technology:** Provides support and guidance to more than 400 users statewide.
- ▶ **Human Resources:** Helps assure that the highest quality employees represent you locally and in Tallahassee.
- ▶ **Financial Services:** Our financial services staff ensure that FEA acts as a faithful steward of your hard-earned dues dollars.
- ▶ **Communications:** Our staff produce materials and work with national, state and local unions and media outlets to shine a light on the work of our members in and outside the classroom.

FEAweb.org

FEA's website has been redeveloped and redesigned — including for use on mobile devices. FEAweb.org is your source for news and resources to help you in your profession and in your union work.



Your Profession

Education isn't just a job — it's a calling. Our members strive to connect with each child to discover his passions and unlock her potential. Your local, state and national unions offer resources for you to use in developing your craft.

A Commitment to Excellence

Your local union and the Florida Education Association are led by passionate and devoted public school teachers and education staff professionals.

As professional educators we demand the most of ourselves, our colleagues and our profession. Your membership means taking ownership of your profession and having a voice in the decisions that affect your career.

Professional Development

Our members care deeply about the students and public schools they serve. The FEA, AFT and NEA are, in turn, dedicated to the professional development, growth and support of those who serve Florida's students every day.

We know that you are constantly looking for new ideas and innovative ways to improve your craft. FEA and your local union are committed to providing meaningful and relevant trainings, continuing education and professional development opportunities year-round.

The listings on pages 16-17 are just a few of the local, state and national programs designed to help you better serve your students.



[www.feaweb.org/
professional-development](http://www.feaweb.org/professional-development)

FEA's website has additional and routinely updated resources and links for professional development, improving professional practice and certification.



Keeping your professional records up-to-date

For both education staff professionals and teachers, maintaining your own up-to-date personal and professional records is every bit as important as keeping lesson plans or work assignments organized.

Having the appropriate documentation on hand can be critical to placement on the salary schedule, clearing up misunderstandings, making sure your evaluation is fair and accurate, etc.

Proper written documentation can help keep a problem from becoming serious or being a problem at all.

Suggested documents to keep in this folder:

- ▶ A copy of the current collective bargaining agreement.
- ▶ Contact information for your local union and building representative.
- ▶ Copies of your personal employment contracts.
- ▶ Copies of any supplemental contracts, if applicable.
- ▶ Retirement records and correspondence.
- ▶ Certificates, licenses, diplomas, etc.
- ▶ Records of in-services, college credits, continuing education courses, etc.
- ▶ All observations and evaluations and your conference notes, responses or comments.
- ▶ Proof of association membership.
- ▶ Proof of college attendance, dates and degrees.

- ▶ Record of accumulated sick leave, personal leave and/or vacation days.
- ▶ Record of commendations, awards and honors.
- ▶ Copies of current and past work and/or teaching schedules.
- ▶ Records of incidents involving student discipline, violence or other disruptive behavior.
- ▶ Copies of letters and memos to and from administrators.
- ▶ Copies of letters and memos to and from parents and colleagues.
- ▶ Copies of all documents in your district-maintained personnel file.
- ▶ Copies of your Individual Professional Development Plan.



Resources for teachers and education staff professionals

Your union membership allows you to network with and learn from more than 4 million educators across the country. Below are some of the resources available for teachers and education staff professionals* from your state and national unions to help you advance and grow professionally.

***Please note:** Each union uses a different term to refer to the wide range of paraprofessionals and non-instructional staff who work at public schools: FEA uses the term education staff professionals, NEA uses education support professionals, and AFT uses "PSRP" or paraprofessionals and school-related personnel.

AFT's PSRP Reporter

ESP

PSRP Reporter is the national publication of AFT paraprofessionals and school-related personnel. Previously available in print, the now online-only publication covers a wide range of professional topics of concern for education staff professionals.

actionnetwork.org/forms/aft-psrp-reporter



AFT TEACH (Together Educating America's Children) Conference

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AFT's biannual conference offers a wide range of high-quality professional development opportunities and showcases the groundbreaking work taking place in local and state affiliates throughout the AFT. The 2021 conference in Washington, D.C. is scheduled for July 8-10.

www.aft.org/our-news/calendar

Anti-bullying resources

ESP TCH

Both of our national unions, AFT and NEA, have launched anti-bullying campaigns and have a number of resources focused specifically on the role of education staff professionals in the fight against bullying.

www.aft.org/bully

www.nea.org/home/neabullyfree.html

Certification Resources

ESP TCH

FEA's website has updated information about certification, including the ParaPro Assessment and recent significant fee reductions — *more than \$100 in some cases* — for many teacher certification tests, including fee waivers for the entire cost of the testing for those who were able to sign up for testing from April 1-May 19, 2020. Thanks to the activism of FEA members, the FL DOE also announced that all temporary and professional certificates that would have expired June 30, 2020, were extended to Dec. 31, 2020 to allow teachers to complete certification courses and tests.

www.feaweb.org/professional-development/certification/

COVID-19 Distance Learning Resources

ESP
TCH

Professional educators know the best learning happens in person. But when Florida's schools

closed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, FEA collected a number of resources for members and parents to engage in at-home education, and distance learning and instruction.

 www.feaweb.org/covid19/digital-learning-resources-for-educators-and-parents/

English Language Learners ESP TCH

Colorín Colorado is the premier national website serving educators and families of English language learners (ELLs) in Grades PreK-12.

 www.colorincolorado.org/

FEA Leads TCH

FEA LEADS professional development programs support early career teachers, build leadership skills and increase teacher retention by using local teacher leaders as instructors and mentors. The FEA LEADS workshops focus on skill-building and teacher mentoring through courses such as New Teacher Mentoring, Reading Certification, General Knowledge Test Review, Exceptional Student Education, Supporting Learning Through Online Instruction and Cultural Competency. The professional development programs FEA sponsors are designed by and for classroom teachers so they remain relevant and up-to-date for the skills teachers need to be successful educators.

FEA's Summer Academy ESP TCH

FEA's Summer Academy is a week-long training session geared toward new, emerging and seasoned local union leaders — combined with professional development workshops for rank-and-file educators.

 www.feaweb.org

FEA Teacher Evaluation Log Book TCH

This booklet, originally developed by the Polk Education Association and adapted by FEA for statewide use, was created to assist teachers in managing the state-mandated changes to the instructional evaluation system.

To request your copy of the log book, please email: advocate@floridaea.org.

NEA edCommunities ESP TCH

NEA's edCommunities is a free platform where teachers, parents, education staff professionals and community members share ideas and resources to improve student success.

 www.mynea360.org

NEA Foundation ESP TCH

The NEA Foundation provides educators — both teachers and education staff professionals — with grants, support and collaboration opportunities to enhance teaching, learning and our schools.

 www.neafoundation.org

National education staff professional conferences ESP

AFT and NEA also each host annual conferences for education staff professionals. Dates of the 2020-21 conferences are currently TBA.

 www.nea.org/grants/31430.htm

 www.aft.org/our-news/calendar

NEA Education Support Professionals online resource hub ESP

The hub offers an expansive collection of online resources, articles, websites and career information compiled by the NEA ESP Quality Department and sorted by job classification.

 www.nea.org/espresources

Share My Lesson ESP TCH

Built by educators across the country, AFT's Share My Lesson brings together a community of teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel to provide high-quality and effective lessons, useful information to use in the classroom and professional development. Share My Lesson has more than 1 million members and more than 400,000 resources that have been downloaded more than 12 million times.

 www.sharemylesson.com

I COUNT
TOO
NOT JUST
TEACHERS!



The Educational Village

When we talk about the “we” of the Florida Education Association, who is that exactly?

The media often call FEA the “state-wide teachers’ union,” and that’s partly right. In truth, we reflect the great educational village, and we are nearly 150,000 strong.

Students stand at the heart of our village, surrounded by all the people that it takes to see that these children and young adults are educated, fed, transported and generally helped along the pathway to becoming successful, happy grownups.

In your district and in counties throughout Florida, at schools small and large, at colleges and universities, our members do practically every type of non-administrative job necessary for the functioning of PreK-12 public schools and the state’s public institutions of higher education.

Our membership also includes people who used to do those jobs and still care deeply about public education — retired education staff professionals, teachers and higher education faculty — and young people at our colleges and universities who are studying to teach.

In Florida’s pre-K-12 public schools, we are education staff professionals:

- Bus drivers
- Paraprofessionals and teacher’s aides

- Licensed practical nurses (LPNs)
- Custodians
- Maintenance workers
- Food service workers
- Secretaries
- Technical employees
- Information technology (IT) workers

And we are teachers and other instructional staff:

- Guidance counselors
- Speech-language pathologists
- Occupational therapists
- Instructional coaches
- Registered nurses (RNs)

In Florida’s public colleges and universities, we are faculty members and graduate and research assistants.

The students who depend on public education need us all — along with parents, faith leaders and other community members who support our public schools.

As we build new relationships in support of students and public schools, it is important that people in our communities and the media know who we are and what we do. We are a multifaceted group that puts students at the center of everything we do — all together, we are the FEA.

As an education staff professional said during an FEA tele-town hall, “It takes many parts to make a whole.”

Your Vote

August 18, 2020
November 3, 2020

Make sure your voice is heard. Each and every election is another opportunity to elect lawmakers who will protect and promote the public schools our students deserve — well-funded, neighborhood schools with classes small enough for one-on-one attention and time for teachers to teach.

Be a proud public education voter! There are important decisions on the 2020 ballot that will affect our students, our schools and our communities for years.

Elections matter from the schoolhouse to the state house to the White House.

Our students' learning conditions and our working conditions — including evaluations, workplace decision making, health care and retirement security — are determined by the

school boards we elect and the legislators we send to Tallahassee.

This is why we encourage FEA members to vote like their profession depends on it — because it does. Use the resources below:

 [FEAweb.org/elections](https://www.feaweb.org/elections)

FEA's Voter Toolkit has a list of FEA endorsed candidates, links to important resources and everything you need to be a proud public education voter.

 [EdVotes.org](https://www.edvotes.org)

EdVotes has additional national resources, endorsements, news and member information from the National Education Association.

Make a Plan to Vote

1

Register to vote or check your voter registration status. You can find links to check your status, register to vote or for your county supervisor of elections at [FEAweb.org/Elections](https://www.feaweb.org/Elections).

2

Make a plan to vote whether it's in person or by mail. Decide how and when you will cast your ballot. Use www.makeaplantovote.com to help make a plan. Send the link to friend and encourage them to make a plan of their own to vote.

3

Request a ballot to vote by mail. Voting by mail has always been safe, convenient and easy, but with Covid-19 it's never been more essential. You can find information on requesting a ballot and links to your county supervisor of elections at [FEAweb.org/Elections](https://www.feaweb.org/Elections).

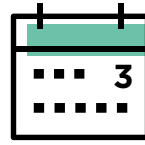
2020 Election Dates



PRIMARY ELECTION

August 18

- July 9 Vote-by-mail begins
- July 20 Deadline to register
- August 8 Early voting begins
- August 10 Last day to request a ballot by mail
- August 15 Early voting ends
- August 18 Election Day



GENERAL ELECTION

November 3

- September 24 Vote-by-mail begins
- October 5 Deadline to register
- October 24 Early voting begins
- October 24 Last day to request a ballot by mail
- October 31 Early voting ends
- November 3 Election Day

Did You Know? FEA members vote at a higher rate than the average Floridian — let's keep that up!

Why Vote-by-Mail?



Voting by mail has always been safe, convenient and easy, but with Covid-19 it's never been more essential.

The critical **August 18 primary election** is also right in the middle of the back-to-school rush, so plan ahead by requesting a mail ballot today at **FEAweb.org/elections**.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Most education employees go through their entire careers without facing disciplinary action. Nevertheless it is important to know and be familiar with your rights should you or your co-workers need to exercise them.

Be Prepared: Know Your Weingarten Rights

Being called into a meeting with your supervisor or an administrator can seem daunting. It's important to stay calm and remember your right to representation, also known as your "Weingarten Rights".

1. Remember: If a reasonable person would believe that discipline could result from the meeting, you have the right to representation.

2. Ask: "What is the purpose of the meeting?" Could discipline result from the meeting? If so...

3. State: "I want union representation." You can ask for representation at anytime during the meeting.

Do not be insubordinate if denied representation.

- Attend the meeting.
- Keep asking for union representation.
- Take good notes.

Do not sign or agree to anything.

Do not make or write statements.

Call your local union office or service unit immediately for assistance.

Other frequently asked questions about your right to representation

Q: Does this right apply to all meetings with administrators?

A: No, only those that conceivably will lead to discipline. This includes anything from reprimands to non-renewal or dismissal.

Q: What if my principal calls in other administrators?

A: You may have your union representative there also. Request it!

Q: What if I am meeting on a curriculum matter and then the subject changes to one that might lead to discipline?

A: Stop the “interview.” Request union representation, even if it means continuing this portion of the meeting at another time.

Q: Can I bring my spouse, a lawyer or a friend?

A: No, the law entitles you to a union representative. You’re not entitled to other representation or witnesses.

Q: Do I have the right to call in a particular union member?

A: Generally, the union steward or representative will be called. The idea is to provide you with skilled union representation, in addition to the moral support of a union colleague.

Q: What is the role of the union representative during such a meeting?

A: The union representative is there to assist the member and to protect the Collective



Bargaining Agreement rights. The union representative has the right to speak on his or her behalf and to meet with the member privately before the interview with management.

Q: Can we give up our right to union representation?

A: There are two ways to give up your right to union representation either by contract language or by inaction. Your collective bargaining agreement does not waive your rights to union representation. However, once on the spot, you might be bullied into waiving your right or not asserting it. In such a case, you have little recourse later.

In addition to the resources listed on the following pages, members may have additional rights spelled out in the collective bargaining agreement between their local union and school district.

Do's and don'ts when facing possible disciplinary action

1. **Do** remain calm.
2. **Do** contact your local union or service unit office.
3. **Do** keep notes.
4. **Don't** make statements if you can avoid it without being insubordinate.
5. **Don't** attend meetings without representation.
6. **Do** get preliminary details.
7. **Don't** agree to a change in job status.
8. **Do** retain letters, documents, notes, etc. on the matter.

How to avoid trouble — and what to do if you don't

Although it is unfortunate, it is a fact that the very nature of your job leaves you open to serious allegations of misconduct, ranging from inappropriate discipline to excessive use of force to sexual misconduct to misappropriation of funds to falsifying records and everything else in between.

While it is impossible to stop allegations from being made against you, there are steps that you can take to protect yourself, your reputation and your career. It is important to note that teachers are not the only employees in a school district who are open to allegations of misconduct. Bus drivers, teacher assistants, food service workers, custodians, secretaries and other education staff professionals are just as likely to be charged as teachers.

By following these simple tips, you can help protect yourself from allegations being made against you.

- ▶ Never touch a child in anger. Avoid any contact that can be perceived as grabbing, pushing, shoving, pinching, twisting or hitting.
- ▶ Avoid being alone with a student, particularly one of the opposite sex. Try to have another student or adult present. If this is not possible, be sure to leave the door open and, if at all possible, move to an open location such as a media center.
- ▶ Do not give a student a ride in your personal vehicle.
- ▶ Do not send cards, personal letters or e-mails to students.
- ▶ Do not give gifts to students.

- ▶ Do not discuss your personal life with students.
- ▶ Do not become a pal to students. Be sure that it is clearly understood that you are the adult, and maintain a professional relationship with students.
- ▶ Do not engage in conversations with students about their dates, romantic problems or sex. If a student needs help, refer him or her to a guidance counselor.
- ▶ Do not let students sit on your lap.
- ▶ Avoid hugging students. If a student wants to hug you, try to do so standing side by side.
- ▶ Don't ask students to give you back rubs.
- ▶ Never drink alcohol in front of students or on a school-sponsored trip, even if students are not present.
- ▶ If you handle money, be sure to follow school and district policy regarding accounting, receipt and deposit procedures.
- ▶ Do not make sexist remarks to students or adults, and do not tell off-color jokes.
- ▶ Do not use profanity, even when there are no students around. Not only is it inappropriate in the workplace, but it may also be offensive to others who can hear you.
- ▶ Keep careful and accurate records. This includes student records, inventory records, financial records or any

documentation for which you are responsible.

- ▶ Arrive at work on time or a few minutes early. Don't leave before the end of the workday without permission.
- ▶ If you receive money from the district as a uniform allowance, be sure you wear the correct uniform.

Remember, if you are called into your supervisor's office for a meeting that could be disciplinary in nature, you have the right to union representation.

You should ask to have the meeting rescheduled at a time when your representative can be present. Then call the union office immediately and ask for help.

If you are the subject of an investigation and are asked to give a statement, you should tell the investigator that you will cooperate but, before giving a written or oral statement, you would like to consult with your union representative. Then call the union office immediately and ask for assistance.



[www.feaweb.org/
member-center/
legal-services/](http://www.feaweb.org/member-center/legal-services/)

Through FEA's Legal Services Program, members can access the best and most comprehensive free legal program of any professional association in the state — covering every aspect of their personal, professional and organizational lives.



Online do's and don'ts for educators

While our lives are increasingly shared online, recent disciplinary trends in Florida indicate that all public school employees need to be cautious about internet communications, particularly if using an employer owned system. Educators should exercise caution to protect their careers.

their personal and professional lives, what might be acceptable in private industry may not be appropriate for public school employees.

Some reminders about who should see your blog or social media:

- ▶ Limit access to your blog or web page using a “friends only” or similar type of restrictive setting.
- ▶ If visitors post to your blog or web page, monitor postings constantly and remove anything that is inappropriate or even gives the appearance of inappropriate conduct.

When using Facebook or other social media platforms members should:

- ▶ Utilize the most secure privacy settings and check those settings often.
- ▶ Use a profile picture they would be proud to see on a billboard in their community.
- ▶ Use common sense when posting photos.
- ▶ Only “friend” people who they actually know and consider to be friends. Never “friend” colleagues who are not their friends outside of work.
- ▶ Never “friend” students.
- ▶ Never “friend” the parents of students.
- ▶ Never post comments or status updates related to their work — including general comments.
- ▶ Because educators in Florida are held to a higher standard of conduct in both

When and where you go online is also important:

- ▶ Check to see if your employer has any policies regarding blogging or web pages. If so, you should review the policy with your local officers or staff.
- ▶ Computer experts can determine all internet sites accessed from your computer, the date and time of day, the length of time on the site, along with frequency of access. School employees have been disciplined

Assume that you have no privacy regarding any email you send or receive on any system owned by your employer ... Send only emails that you would feel comfortable having your mother read on the front page of your local paper!

not only for accessing inappropriate sites but for accessing such sites during work hours and for using school computers to access inappropriate sites at home.

Only “friend” people who you actually know and consider to be friends on social media. Never “friend” students or parents of students.

- ▶ Know your Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and follow it. Your employer can discipline you for failure to follow the policy. If possible, do not use the school board’s computer system for anything other than school-related matters. Even opening your private email may cause problems.
- ▶ Email messages made or received by agency employees in connection with official business are public records and subject to disclosures under Florida law. There is no exemption for so-called “personal” email on public computers, but private email stored in government owned computers does not automatically become public record just because of that storage.
- ▶ Keep your passwords private. Don’t share with students or colleagues and change them often. Remember to log off or lock your computer if you leave your work station.
- ▶ Assume that you have no privacy regarding any email you send or receive on any system owned by your employer, especially if the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) states that the employer has the right to search. Send only emails that you would feel comfortable having your mother read on the front page of your local paper!

A few reminders about your online content:

- ▶ Do not blog or post about your job duties, colleagues, supervisor or students to minimize the possibility of disclosing confidential information, sharing information

about a private workplace complaint, or otherwise carelessly or unintentionally engaging in speech that could affect your employment.

- ▶ If you post or blog as a citizen about a non-job related matter of public concern (elections, environmental issues, etc.) be careful that your comments do not negatively affect your employer’s effectiveness or efficiency or otherwise disrupt the workplace.
- ▶ Even if you are posting or blogging about innocuous information (i.e. your favorite football team or family genealogy), you still must be careful not to make statements that might harm your employer or interfere with your ability to carry out your job duties.
- ▶ Do not post or blog about personal subjects (i.e. dating, romance, or drug or alcohol use). Your blog or web page should not contain any references to sexual subjects, or contain vulgar or profane language or graphics. If your blog or web page was a movie, it should be rated “G.”
- ▶ Blogging and posting anonymously does not protect you. The names of bloggers, web page authors and other internet users can be discovered through litigation.



[www.feaweb.org/
member-center/
know-your-rights/](http://www.feaweb.org/member-center/know-your-rights/)

With Florida’s educators working remotely during the coronavirus pandemic, FEA Legal Services reissued the above guidance along recommendations on using Google Voice. Both, and more, can be found on the Know Your Rights page above.

WARNING: Testing violations can end your career

The DOE is cracking down on alleged violations of testing procedures. Even simple mistakes are costing teachers their careers.

Tests you give

Alleged violations have included: giving too much testing time to students; improper accommodations for ESE students; unauthorized accommodations for students with perceived special needs; encouraging students to use the strategies learned in class; and saying anything to students that is not included in the script.

It's important to follow all of the testing rules — and to ask if you do not understand. Never assume. Even the appearance of a violation can prompt an investigation and potentially stiff sanctions, often including up to two years suspension of your certificates.

FEA has published guidance to help members avoid testing and other violations: Ask your local union for a copy.

Tests you take

When you enroll in your course or before you take an examination, you are required to sign a non-plagiarism oath — you may remember clicking “Agree” on the Academic Integrity Statement preceding an exam. That statement says “that by participating in this course I will be responsible for ensuring non-plagiarism or copying of another participant’s assignments/work and submitting it as my own.”

Yet, you probably had no idea that working on assignments with a partner and submitting your assignments as a team would be considered plagiarism or collusion.

By nature our work is collaborative and we do our best work when we work together. ***But in this case it can be a career-ender.***

Plagiarism is defined as the act of “stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as one’s own,” “using another’s created production without crediting the source,” or “presenting as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.”

Teachers are being charged with collusion or plagiarism when they work on an assignment with a partner and they both turn in that assignment — even if only a small number of words or ideas are the same.

Each exam is cross referenced with computer software to all other takers including those from previous years, as well as internet sources. If the work is deemed insufficiently original and individual, teachers are being charged with plagiarism by DOE are having their certificates suspended for not less than 12 months, among other penalties.

What can you do?

DO NOT work with a partner on your assignments.

DO NOT use responses from previous years.

DO NOT copy and paste material from the internet.

If you have any additional questions please contact your local union or the FEA Legal Department at (888) 522-4912.



[www.feaweb.org/
member-center](http://www.feaweb.org/member-center)

The Member Center on FEA's new website is updated regularly with new resources, events and information you need to know as a public school employee.

This legal advisory was originally provided to FEA members during the 2016-17 school year as a 10 Minute Meeting. 10 Minute Meetings are provided throughout the school year on issues of concern to FEA members.

Your Benefits

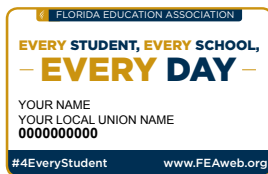
Educators spend their own money on materials, decorations and school supplies. To help you save money, FEA, AFT and NEA have partnered with merchants you know and trust to provide discounts year-round.

These programs are a part of our commitment to helping our members live the American Dream — by providing members solutions that improve their lives, allowing them to focus on supporting their students.

You do not need to know your FEA/Access membership number to access the national AFT and NEA benefit programs.

Some local unions have begun establishing member benefits ambassadors at school sites in their district. To learn more about this expanding program, existing benefits (such as free college, travel discounts, debt counseling, home mortgage, and more), and limited-time offers, follow FEA member benefits on Facebook.

 www.facebook.com/FEAMemberBenefits



The FEA/Access program delivers savings of up to 50% off at more than 350,000 premier shops, restaurants, hotels, retailers and more – across the country and even right in your own neighborhood!

Once your local union membership has been processed, you will receive this card in the mail with your membership number and instructions on how to login for the first time.

Use the MyDeals app (see rightmost column) or log in to www.FEAweb.org to access your member benefits.

 www.FEAweb.org/member-benefits



A Union of Professionals

Many of AFT's member benefits can be accessed via the Union Plus app (see rightmost column). Some of the most popular are:

- ▶ New members can sign up for one year of \$5,000 of no-cost term life insurance coverage at: www.aftbenefits.org/freeterm
- ▶ Relocation services including vetted, pre-approved realtors, mortgage cash back incentives and discounts on storage systems and moving trucks.
- ▶ A robust auto club program, with household coverage for only \$29, after gas rebate.

 www.aft.org/benefits




Build a better life with NEA Member Benefits. Our programs and services deliver the recognition you deserve. Visit neamb.com to learn more about these programs:

- ▶ Get the trusted insurance protection you want for your family at no cost to you through NEA Complimentary Life Insurance.
- ▶ The NEA® Retirement Program helps you manage your retirement savings and income needs.
- ▶ The NEA Student Loan Forgiveness Navigator offers a free online Student Loan Evaluation tool to determine eligibility for federal programs to help you manage your student loan debt.

 www.neamb.com

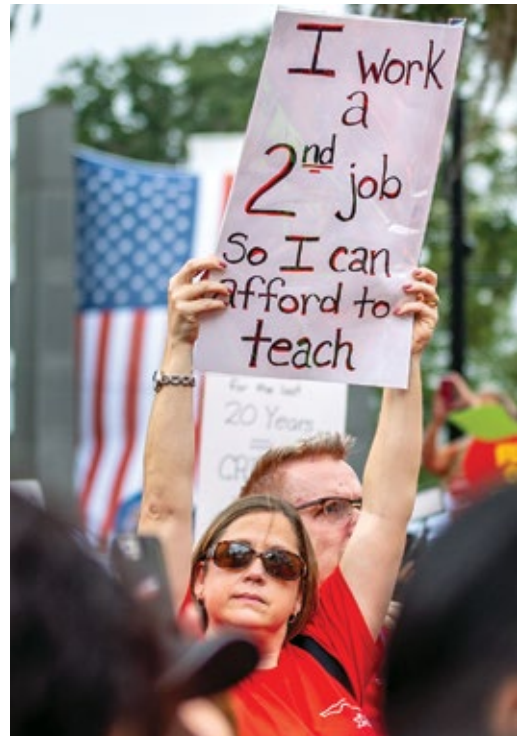
Tackling student loan debt

As part of the CARES Act passed in March 2020, AFT and NEA members fought for and won a six-month suspension of most federal student loan payments and interest accrual (through Sept. 30, 2020). Even before the pandemic, AFT and NEA had ongoing national campaigns to address the student loan debt crisis affecting their members:

 www.forgivemystudentdebt.org

 www.nea.org/degreesnotdebt

While these campaigns educate members about and promote federal programs, please note that federal government regulations governing these programs may change in the future.



NTA Life is dedicated to Protecting the Heart of Our Community. That means we're focused on serving the very people that serve our communities: educators, emergency responders, and government employees. Our products and services are tailored to fit the needs of these professionals.

With more than 40 years of experience serving our nation's educators, we've become skilled at refining our offerings in order to provide the best benefits and support for an educator's lifestyle. We're proud to serve teachers (NTA stands for National Teacher Associates) and we look forward to doing so well into the future.

 www.NTAlife.com



Creative Benefits for Educators — owned by locals of the Florida Education Association — provides quality, 'best in class' members-only benefits, products, and services customized for FEA members through our partner companies:

- ▶ **Liberty Mutual**
- ▶ **American Fidelity**
- ▶ **LoansAtWork**
- ▶ **H & R Block**
- ▶ **CrossCountry Mortgage**

These partners offer benefits and savings in auto and home insurance coverages, supplemental health and life insurance plans, emergency loans, tax planning services, and a preferred mortgage savings plan. Creative Benefits offers resources through our partners that assist members to make their lives more secure and provide peace of mind.

 www.cbeducators.com



Saving money with your member benefits is now even easier with the MyDeals and Union Plus mobile apps, available on either the Google Play or iTunes App stores.

The FEA MyDeals app gives you show-your-phone discounts at 250,000 places. Go to the iTunes App Store or Google Play to download My Deals Mobile®. Use your 10-digit membership number. If asked for the Program Key, enter "9389-" followed by your 10-digit member number.

The Abenity Union Plus mobile app lets you take many of your nationwide AFT Member Benefits on the go.

 www.unionplus.org/

Why Politics Matter

Everything that the Legislature has done to public education over the past 20 years can be undone through electoral work, political participation and member organizing.

Every student deserves the opportunity to attend a well-resourced, fully-staffed neighborhood public school.

This is why it is incumbent upon each of the nearly 150,000 members of the Florida Education Association to engage directly with their elected officials and to hold them accountable for their votes on public education — before, during and after each election.

Take time this school year to:

Vote in the 2020 Elections

There are two critical elections this fall:

- ✓ August 18, 2020 (Primary Election)
- ✓ November 3, 2020 (General)

Visit FEAweb.org/elections and see pages 20-21 for all the resources you need to be a proud Public School Voter.

Participate in the 2021 Legislative Session

The 2021 Legislative Session runs from March 2 to April 30. Visit FEAweb.org/session for everything you need to stay informed and take action — including our popular Frontline blog.



FUND
MY
FUTURE!!

Your Future

The end of each school year carries with it a mix of emotions: joy, relief, accomplishment. Some educators may also be facing new beginnings. Your local union and FEA are ready to help with the next phase of your personal and professional journey.

The FEA Survival Guide for Non-Renewals, Layoffs and Retirement

Any time someone is informed that their contract won't be renewed, it exacts an emotional toll. Therefore FEA, in conjunction with your local association, has prepared a resource in the event that you find yourself in this difficult and overwhelming position: *The FEA Survival Guide for Non-Renewals, Layoffs and Retirement*.

This comprehensive guide outlines a number of steps you can take to ensure that you will receive all the benefits due to you from both the school district and the state. The guide is available under Member Resources on MyFEA Account page (you must login to see it).

 feaweb.org/member-center/myfea-account/

FEA-Retired: A continued commitment

Are you retiring or considering retirement? If so, FEA-Retired is the official statewide organization of Florida's retired education employees. With more than 28 local chapters and nearly 4,000 members, FEA-Retired works to improve and strengthen the programs that affect retired

educators: retirement benefits, Medicare and Social Security. Your FEA-Retired membership allows you to:

- ▶ Stay connected with fellow National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers members and programs
- ▶ Engage in opportunities to share your expertise by volunteering and mentoring
- ▶ Benefit from NEA's and AFT's political and legislative efforts to protect your retirement resources
- ▶ Stay informed through subscriptions to: *This Active Life*, *AFT Education*, the FEA Retired newsletter, and *The Advocate*

FEA-Retired members maintain their involvement in education through mentoring, volunteering, grant-making, mobilization and speaking out about education issues. FEA-Retired also works with active members to prepare for their retirement.

You've dedicated your professional life to public education. FEA-Retired is the best way for you to continue your commitment after you stop working.

 www.feaweb.org/fea-retired

Tackling student debt

Both of FEA's national affiliates, AFT and NEA, have campaigns to address the student loan debt crisis affecting their members. While these campaigns educate members about and promote federal programs, please note that federal government regulations governing these programs may change in the future.

 www.forgivemystudentdebt.org

 www.nea.org/degreesnotdebt

If you have questions about the material in the guide or if you need additional information, please feel free to call your local president or staff.

In order to maintain your NEA insurance after you retire, you must become a member of FEA-Retired. Pre-retired lifetime memberships are also available for educators nearing retirement.

Mark Your Calendar



The start of any new school year is always a busy time. To help out, here are a few reminders for every educator's to-do list. As a professional educator you know the value of collaboration, so team up with a colleague on these critical activities!

JULY | Sign-up for a mail ballot for the 2020 elections.

The back-to-school rush is a busy time for educators. Stay safe and plan ahead for the critical August 18 primary election — when many school board races are held — by requesting a mail ballot and making sure your registration is up-to-date.

See pages 20-21

www.feaweb.org/elections

AUGUST | Attend your local union meeting (or Zoom call!)

Your union is your professional organization. Taking an active role connects with other dedicated educators in your county and across the state.

Ask your building representative when your local meets.

AUGUST 18 | Vote!

The Aug. 18 primary is when many school board races are held.

See pages 20-21

www.feaweb.org/elections

SEPTEMBER | Get up to \$20,000 in no-cost life insurance

New members are eligible to sign-up for two different

complimentary life insurance policies from AFT (\$5,000) and NEA (\$15,000).

See pages 28-29

OCTOBER | Explore your professional development options.

FEA and your local union have a full range of relevant development offerings and resources available for teachers and education staff professionals.

See pages 14-17

NOVEMBER 3 | Vote!

The November 3 presidential election is a critical part of the fight for public school funding and a better future.

See pages 20-21.

www.feaweb.org/elections

FEBRUARY | Get ready for the 2021 legislative session.

The 2021 legislative session runs from March 2 to April 30. Everything you need to stay informed and take action — including our Frontline blog — can be found on the FEA website.

www.feaweb.org/session

MAY | Plan the next phase of your professional journey

FEA has resources for retiring, non-renewed or laid-off educators. Our national affiliates have programs to help members tackle student loan debt.

See page 31