

*SUPPORT SATURDAY*

**WHAT TO DO  
IF YOU'RE  
NON-RENEWED**

# BREATHE. 🤝

Facing unemployment is one of the most discouraging, difficult, and frightening situations.

You did not create this situation; it is not fair, but you will get through it!

And remember, you are not alone! Your union has your back!

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[SDOC-OCEA Contracts](#)

Link 

# TODAY'S INFORMATION

Our information comes from FEA,  
our state-level union.

## Non-Renewal, Layoffs, and Retirement: A Survivor's Guide



A Service Provided by

The Florida Education Association Offices of Legal Services

and Your Local Union



## A FEW TIPS:

- Apply in nearby school districts
- Be prepared to respond to why your current school non-reappointed you
- Acknowledge areas you are working on to be the great teacher you know yourself to be
- Show appreciation for the opportunity to interview, and remember, you are asking a new school to give you a chance.

# **FIRST STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOU ARE FACING NON- RENEWAL**

It's not just about finding a new job!



## **1. GET ORGANIZED AND START A FILE. IN IT, SAVE:**

- **A copy of your non-renewal letter.** You will need a copy of the letter when you file for Reemployment Assistance (formerly known as Unemployment Compensation).
- **A copy of your salary statement (individual contract).** You will need a copy when you apply for Reemployment Assistance. You can obtain a copy by contacting the school district Human Resource or Payroll department.
- **A copy of your W-2,** which you'll need when filing for Reemployment Assistance. You can obtain a copy by contacting the school district Human Resource or Payroll department.
- **Retain receipts for any purchases related to your job search,** even job search travel expenses may be eligible tax deductions.
- **Articles regarding non-renewal and layoffs in your school district.** These may come in handy if any legal action becomes necessary.
- **All correspondence related to your job search.** We'll talk about this more a little later under "Reemployment Assistance.

## **2. REQUEST TO VIEW YOUR PERSONNEL FILE**

- Under your SDOC contract, you are allowed to view your personnel file once per year. Read it to ensure it contains accurate records.

### **3. SEND A LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT STATING YOUR DESIRE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR OTHER POSITION.**

- Sample letters in FEA packet!

**4. IF YOU HAVE DONE ADDITIONAL COURSE WORK SINCE YOUR TRANSCRIPT WAS EVALUATED, REQUEST THAT IT BE RE-EVALUATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT.**

- You must provide a certified copy of your transcript.
- You may be qualified to teach additional courses or to apply for additional certificates in other areas.
- State your desire to be considered for any vacancies for which you are qualified,
- Request that vacancy lists be sent to you as they become available.

## **5. APPLY FOR ANY ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATES FOR WHICH YOU ARE NOW QUALIFIED**

- Make sure certificates you currently hold are properly registered and renewed with the superintendent.

**6. ON THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL, SEND A LETTER TO THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT TO REQUEST IMMEDIATE PAYMENT OF ALL COMPENSATION DUE FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR.**

- Be certain to have your administration agree in writing that your earned insurance benefits will continue until the first day of the next school term.
- Check your locally negotiated contract and your insurance policy (contract) for specifics.
- Note: Receipt of insurance benefits during the summer months should not affect your eligibility for reemployment assistance, since such benefits are merely later payment for a benefit earned while you were employed.
- NOTE: Under COBRA, you are eligible (at your own cost) for continuation of insurance benefits after the board paid group health insurance ceases. Check with the OCEA office if you have questions.

## **7. ON THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL, YOU MAY APPLY FOR REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.**

- Please be aware that you must be actively seeking and available for employment during the summer months to qualify for Reemployment Assistance Benefits for that period.

# **APPLYING FOR RE-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

(Formerly Unemployment Compensation)

## YOU CAN ONLY APPLY FOR REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE BENEFITS OVER THE INTERNET USING “CONNECT”

- Remember, there's no stigma or shame in this process. You are keeping your family protected!
- File for Reemployment Assistance quickly because it takes your benefits a couple of weeks to start
- We recommend having your federal taxes withheld; otherwise, you may find yourself in a financial crunch at tax time. **Visit Reemployment Assistance Resource Center - FloridaJobs.org** to learn about eligibility requirements and get started

You should consult with your local Reemployment Assistance Office regarding when to file in order to maximize benefits.

You can find your local Reemployment Assistance Office by calling 800-204-2418 and following the prompts.

A rough estimate of expected benefits would be half of an individual's previous full-time wages, up to a maximum of \$275 per week

### NOTE:

Any multi-checks you receive at the end of the school year are for work already performed over the school year. These checks **do not count** as compensation for purposes of Reemployment Assistance eligibility.

# JOB SEARCH ON RE-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

- During the time that you are receiving Reemployment Assistance Benefits, you must be able to work, be available for work, and actively seeking work.
- The law requires that a work search record be kept.
- This record of your work search must include the date and method of each employer contact, the result, and the employer's name and address.
- To be considered a contact, the person receiving benefits must either write the prospective employer or contact the prospective employer in person.
- It is not sufficient to call the employer on the telephone. An accurate record of all contacts should be kept including the person contacted, the method of contact, and the date of contact.
- Copies of all letters or emails to prospective employers should be kept

# IMPORTANT NOTE

You will not be denied benefits merely because you are eligible to be placed on a substitute list for the following fall unless the school district guarantees regular substitute employment.

**However, if you are a teacher and offered a full-time contract during the summer for the following fall, you will no longer be eligible to receive benefits during the summer and if such benefits have been received, it is likely that they will have to be repaid.**

# HEALTH INSURANCE

## Current SDOC Insurance:

1. If you are terminated, your insurance coverage ends on the last day of school.
2. If you resign, your insurance coverage ends one day before the start of the following school year.

### *COBRA*

This acronym, which derives from the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, has become part of the lexicon of the unemployed. COBRA is a federal law that allows you to continue your health care coverage after you leave your job. Unfortunately, you are responsible for paying the cost of the coverage, and there is a maximum continuation period of 18 months.

You have 60 days to decide if you want to elect COBRA, and within those 60 days, you can elect retroactively. This means that if you break your arm on the 59<sup>th</sup> day, you can elect COBRA and you will be covered. If you break your arm on the 61<sup>st</sup> day, you will pay for the cast yourself.

It is savvy not to elect COBRA unless you need it within the 60-day period, because, presumably, you will find another job within 60 days and your new job will offer insurance coverage. If your new employer's insurance picks you up quickly, there is no point in having paid for it during those 60 days.

There are two circumstances under which you should not play the 60-day waiting game:

- If you have ongoing medical needs, it is best to elect COBRA right away; and
- If you plan to go overseas, attempting to activate COBRA before traveling can be risky.

# YOUR UNION RESOURCES – MORE IN PACKET!

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## *Employee Assistance Programs*

Your local union will have information regarding access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). These counseling programs are often part of your union contract or in some cases included in school district policy or under your insurance plans. They range from credit counseling to stress management to substance abuse counseling. EAPs are benefits you have earned through your employment, so don't be afraid to ask for assistance for which you may qualify.

## *Continuation of FEA Membership*

Frequently, FEA Legal Services and Organizing and Field Services have been the key to ensuring that the contractual and statutory rights of educational employees are honored by local boards.

You may maintain your legal protection, along with all other rights and benefits, with the maintenance of your active membership in the FEA.

You can't buy this kind of protection anywhere else for so little money. It can mean the difference between future employment in your current location and relocation to find other employment.

If you have questions or need additional information, call your local union.

## *American Federation of Teachers*

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has programs to help members struggling with financial issues or working to keep their heads above water. Here are a few steps they recommend:

- Credit Counseling:  
877-833-1745 or <https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/credit-counseling>
- Counselors are available 24/7. Members get free credit counseling session with budget analysis and advice, free financial planning tools, and other information. If the member chooses to use the vendor for debt management planning, the member is given a 33% discount.



# **REMEMBER, YOU'VE GOT THIS!**

This time is scary, but we're here for you.  
Reach out to our OCEA office with any  
questions or concerns!

