

DIRECTIONS

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KNOW THE LAW - CONTRACT RENEWAL PROCEDURE

Wisconsin Statute 118.22 outlines requirements for districts to give a written preliminary notice of nonrenewal to any full-time teacher being considered for nonrenewal for the following school year. The notice must be received no later than the last day of February (this year it's February 29). If you are a part-time teacher or an ESP member, the statute does not cover you. Part-time teachers may be covered under your CBA. ESP employees are not covered by this law; see the last paragraph of this article.

If you receive a notice, act now. You have 5 days to request a meeting with management. Contact your local union immediately for assistance. Call CAUS-North at 800-397-2287 and ask to speak to your UniServ Director.

Do not meet or discuss a pending nonrenewal with the administration without a union rep. Above all, do not resign before talking with a union rep. Some administrators try to talk staff into resigning to avoid a nonrenewal, without explaining the alternatives to resignation or the possible loss of unemployment benefits.

If you do not receive a written notice of consideration of nonrenewal by the last day of February, you should receive an individual contract or letter of intent by March 15. The contract must be signed and returned to the District by April 15th (a Sunday) so we recommend you return it by April 13th. If you do not receive one, contact your local representative for advice on what to do. Be sure to keep a copy of all correspondence about your employment and give copies to your union representative if you have problems.

We have heard that some districts are attempting to use the non-renewal process rather than following the layoff language in still valid collective bargaining agreements. Please contact your UniServ office if you believe this is happening in your district.

Educational Support Professionals (ESP) and teachers, who receive layoff notices, should contact a representative from your local union without delay. Your local rep will help you understand your rights under the contract – these may include advance notice of layoff, seniority and bumping rights, unemployment benefits, continuation rights for medical insurance, etc.

WARNING - WRS STUDY UNDERWAY

Governor Walker's budget requires a study of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS). The Department of Employee Trust Funds (DETF), the Department of Administration (DOA), and the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) were directed to study the structure and benefits of the WRS.

According to the DETF, the study must specifically address the issues of:

- (1) establishing a defined contribution plan as an option for participating employees; and
- (2) permitting employees to opt out of employee required contributions and limiting retirement benefits for those employees to a money purchase annuity.

The study is due no later than June 30, 2012, and the findings and recommendations must be reported to the Governor and the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance.

Your pension benefits are a defined benefit plan that means you will receive a guaranteed pension amount. A defined contribution is a risky option that leaves your pension subject to the whims of the stock market. In addition, allowing employees to opt out of the system undermines the stability and overall health of the pension system.

According to the DETF, the WRS is a very healthy, fully-funded pension system. The DETF, from its

website, says “We believe the study will shed more light on how the WRS works, its unique features that make it so healthy, and how the WRS supports retirement security for public employees across Wisconsin at a reasonable cost.” The study will be publicly available after it has been submitted to the Governor and the Joint Finance Committee.

What can you do? A petition started by a retired educator is available on-line that tells the Governor to keep his hands off WRS. Please log on and sign the petition at <http://signon.org/sign/save-the-wisconsin-retiremen>

RECALL WALKER/ RECLAIM WISCONSIN OPPORTUNITIES

Recall Training – Please join us for a workshop covering our union’s plans to recall Scott Walker. Members and retirees interested in leading local union efforts around the recall are encouraged to attend.

Highlights of this workshop include:

- * our union’s plan to win,
- * the next phases of the 4X10 initiative,
- * talking to colleagues, families & friends,
- * creating and implementing local union plans,
- * legal dos and don’ts.

Area Training Locations/Dates/Times:

- * Platteville - Monday, January 23, 5:30-8:00 p.m. (dinner at 5:00), SWEA Office
- * McFarland - Wednesday, January 25, 5:30-8:00 p.m. (dinner at 5:00), CAUS Office
- * Madison, Saturday, January 28, (SWOBC Conference), Concourse Hotel & MATC

We can win if we all work together!

Petitions – All petitions must be in by January 13, so make sure to get them in to your local president or your local recall office.

Signs - We have recall signs available. CAUS has about a hundred yard signs available for free if you can give them a good home. Come to the CAUS office in McFarland or talk to your local president if you want one. This is an 11.29 Communication with members.

WEA ACADEMY SUPPORTS ESP MEMBERS

Need to show that you are highly qualified for your Title I School? Then, complete the Basic Skills for Para Educators course being offered by the WEA Academy. This self-paced online program offers you a blend of web-based review and practice and direct interaction with instructors from a Wisconsin technical college. While the program generally takes 40 hours to complete, you begin by taking an assessment that will tell you what you need to do.

ESP members are encouraged to enroll together. Visit <http://weacademy.org/catalog.cfm>

Successful completion of this course fulfills the requirement of being highly qualified in Title I Schools.

REMINDERS

Fight Back Conference – January 28, 2012

You can still register for the Fight Back Conference set for Saturday, January 28, 2012, in Madison, at the Concourse Hotel and MATC-Downtown.

The Conference, subtitled the Southwest Bargaining and Organizing Conference, draws participants from five other UniServs and at least one other union. Contact the CAUS office at 800-397-2287 for details and to register.

Get Ready for PDP Verification!

Get Your Ducks in A Row -1/21/12, 9:00-11:30 a.m. You will be given the tools to make sure your PDP is ready for final review. You will also be able to set up an appointment for your final PDP review.

Free PDP Verification – 2/11/12, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. (by appointment). Review teams will be available to provide PDP plan approval.

Both sessions will be held at the CAUS Office, 4800 Ivywood Trail, McFarland. Call Margo Josheff at 1-800-397-2287 or e-mail at josheffm@weac.org.

WALKER FAILURE