



Engaging & Empowering Educators

Steward Monthly

September 01, 2016

How to Be Your Own Best Advocate

Advice to share with members and prospective members to help them be winners in the job survival game:

1. Make contact with BTU. Become a member. Find out what the benefits are.
2. Know your contract. Many of your job duties and responsibilities are spelled out there.
3. Check rights if you are new to the District. They may differ during this "trial" period.
4. Know your benefits. Sit down with a BTU rep or check them out on the BTU web site.
5. Follow your supervisor's directions. You may not like the order but you have an obligation to follow it. Grieve later.
6. Check your personnel file. Take time to look at your file at least once a year. Make a list of the contents, sign and date the list, and keep it with your important papers.
7. Don't sign anything until you have checked with BTU. Don't be pressured or persuaded to sign anything until you fully understand the document.
8. Take someone with you to conferences. If you think a meeting could lead to discipline or you are discussing a serious issue with your supervisor(s), don't go without your steward.
9. Don't let problems get out of control. Don't wait too long to bring up a problem or issue with your steward. If you are going to file a grievance, you have strict timelines to follow.
10. Ignorance is no excuse. Claiming, "I didn't know!" usually won't get you out of trouble.
11. Be on time and do your job to the best of your ability. If there are problems accomplishing this, see your steward.

Recruit a New Member and Win a TV!

President Anna Fusco announced a special recruitment drive. All Stewards are being asked to recruit one member between now and September 14.

As a bonus to you for helping BTU grow, your name will be entered in a drawing to be held at the September 21 Steward Council Meeting for a \$250 gift card and a 32" TV! Stewards will receive one entry for each new member. Cards can be found on BTU web site at:

www.btuonline.com/pdf/dues_card.pdf



Upcoming Steward Events

Tuesday, September 13 (9-2)

ESP Steward Training
BTU Hall

Wednesday, September 21 (4:45)

Steward Council Meeting
Tamarac Community Center
8601 West Commercial

Friday, September 30 (9-2)

EP Steward Training (Release Day)

Thursday, October 6

AFT - AROS Walk-in
(Details to be announced)

Saturday, November 05

Save the Date: BTU Harvest Picnic
(Details to be announced)

Beware of Politicians Bearing “Gifts”

Once again, the Florida Department of Education is trying to sell you on the state’s liability insurance program, but they’re not telling you the whole story. The reason for this program isn’t to help teachers ... it’s designed to drive members away from FEA and BTU by deceiving school employees into a false sense of security.

The DOE Liability Insurance Policy:

- ▶ Has a **\$50,000.00** per claim deductible
- ▶ The DOE policy **only** kicks in after all other sources of insurance are exhausted, including the District’s, NEA’s and any type of self-insurance.
- ▶ **Does not** cover criminal charges even for on the job allegations;
- ▶ **Does not** cover intentional acts;
- ▶ **Does not** cover certification cases;
- ▶ **Does not** cover licensure matters;
- ▶ **Does not** cover discipline cases;
- ▶ **Does not** cover personnel actions;
- ▶ **Does not** cover part-time “instructional personnel”;
- ▶ **Does not** cover general educational support staff;
- ▶ **Does not** cover administrative hearings;
- ▶ **Does not** cover arbitrations;
- ▶ **Does not** cover off-duty conduct;
- ▶ **Does not** cover cases involving teacher/coach transportation of students;
- ▶ **Does not** cover Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) cases;
- ▶ **Does not** cover suits for discrimination;

- ▶ **Does not** cover you unless you give **written notice** of your claim to the insurance company “as soon as practicable”— whatever that means!
- ▶ **Does not** cover you if you admit to any wrongdoing or liability;
- ▶ **Does not** cover you if you take any action which may prejudice the insurance company — unless you have the insurance company’s written consent to do so;
- ▶ **Does not** allow you to refuse if the insurance company wants to use your name in a lawsuit for damages from third parties;
- ▶ **Does not** cover any penalty or fine assessed against **you** if you fail to report child abuse or if you fail to timely self-report your own arrest or conviction;
- ▶ **Does not** cover your attorneys’ fees if you have to sue the insurance company for denying you coverage.

FEA

Provides comprehensive legal protection for all members.

This program is based on a failed program, which was in effect from 2001 through 2006 when it was finally repealed. A state study found that during the five years of this program, Florida spent \$5.6 million in premiums to obtain claims payments of only \$50,375. Obviously, there was no need for this coverage in the first place.

This program was repealed for good reason, and the ulterior motives for why politicians want to reinstate it now are downright insulting: they want to eliminate your union. The FEA legal programs protect all members in employment-related disputes, employment criminal-related issues and provide access to attorneys for other professional, personal and union matters. They uphold the values and services important to educators like you.

If you’re looking for superior representation and protection from a comprehensive legal program, then the Florida Education Association provides the best liability insurance and legal services available to teachers and education staff professionals working in public education.

Take a look at the [comparison above](#) and you’ll see that the state liability program won’t help you in a great many areas. This information is current, but the liability program is scheduled to be renewed August 17 for the upcoming school year. We do not know if the state will be making changes in the current program or changing insurance carriers, but the fact remains that this program was resurrected in an effort to suppress membership in your union. Don’t be fooled by the state’s liability insurance offer. It doesn’t offer anywhere near the protection that you will get through FEA.

Credit Matters!
Understanding Your Credit Score

Learn how your credit score is determined, who looks at your score and how to maintain a better score. This complimentary presentation will teach you things you never learned in school! Presented by BrightStar Credit Union, your Partner in Education.



Thursday, September 29th
4:30pm to 6:00pm @ BTU Hall

Light refreshments served while supplies

Building A Well-Oiled Machine at Your Site

In order to create a union which is united and speaks with one voice we need every site to be organized and have a strong union presence. As steward you play a critical role. By taking these simple steps you will be well on the way to having your site operating as a well-oiled union machine:

- First, work with the stewards at your site to identify a member at each grade level/department who will be a part of your member engagement team.
- Second, work with the team to map where the members and potential members are within your building.
- Third, determine who will approach the potential members and invite them to join BTU.
- Fourth, connect with the member engagement team on a regular basis. Use them to insure that important communication from BTU is read by the members in their grade level/department and that they are mobilized and ready to take action.

For help to create the mapping and establishing a member engagement team at your site, contact your BTU field staff representative.

Reminders



Faculty Council Elections In accordance with Article 17 of our contract, Faculty Council Elections should be held at the beginning of each school year. View it www.btuonline.com/pdf/Article17.pdf

Reach out to BTU! Your President, Anna Fusco, and/or your Field Staff would be happy to schedule meetings to talk with members. You can reach President Fusco and afusco@btuonline.com For Field Staff information, go to www.btuonline.com/AboutBTU/fieldreps.htm

Questions About PD Hours, Principal Directed Time, Breaks, or Lunch? Go to www.btuonline.com/info/ContractSpotlight/Time.htm

Know Your Contract

Student Discipline Plan:

EP Stewards, please review *Article 11, Section F Student Discipline Plan*. "Each school's School Advisory Council (SAC), working with teachers appointed by the school's Faculty Council, shall develop a comprehensive student discipline plan."

Who is on your professional development planning team?

Another area of the contract to review is: *Article 5, Teacher Planning Days, section L-5*, "A joint school committee comprised of an equal number of SAC Committee members appointed by the principal and the Faculty Council shall be established as the School Professional Development Team..."

Professional Development Offerings

Sat, Sep 17, 2016	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Sep 24, 2016	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Oct 29, 2016	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Nov 5, 2016	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Nov 19, 2016	ESE Classroom Strategies
Sat, Dec 3, 2016	ESE Classroom Strategies
Sat, Jan 21, 2017	ESE Classroom Strategies
Sat, Jan 28, 2017	ESE Classroom Strategies
Sat, Feb 4, 2017	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Feb 11, 2017	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Mar 4, 2017	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Mar 11, 2017	Accessible Literacy Framework
Sat, Apr 29, 2017	ESE Classroom Strategies
Sat, May 6, 2017	ESE Classroom Strategies

Call for Trainers!

The Broward Teachers Union is looking for dynamic adult trainers! If you would be interested in becoming a BTU Trainer, please download the application from the Professional Development section of the BTU Web Site (<http://www.btuonline.com/resources/prodev.htm>). If you have any additional questions about the above classes or about becoming a trainer please email Shafeza Moonab, our PD Coordinator at smoonab@btuonline.com.