



Red River United NEWSLETTER

October 2022



President's Corner

It's Time for a Contract

It's time for a contract. Why now? Let's go back to the beginning. When we began this organization as the Caddo Federation of Teachers and Support Personnel back in 1997, we started writing policies for the good of teachers and school employees. The CFT/SP wrote policies on twice monthly pay, rules for faculty meetings and reporting and dismissing, duty-free lunch. We worked to pass an investigatory policy for impermissible punishment. We worked to make the \$500 supplement at Christmas a permanent part of the salary schedule. The list goes on and on.

Yet, what we have found is, although we have a policy manual of over 800 pages, if administration and the board decide to ignore them, they will and have continued to do so, especially over the last two years. They have developed their own Echo Chamber. We find ourselves in a constant battle with Caddo Administration and Board. This is as unprofessional as it gets and, quite frankly, is counter to our core beliefs and is not sustainable.

We find ourselves at a crossroad. We know we have critical shortages in all employment areas. We know as far as salaries are concerned; we are still far below the Southern Regional Average. We know, that instead of addressing these areas, what we are experiencing is a lack of support, respect, and professionalism.

Now, before you think we are going to storm the school board building, let's talk about what a contract would mean. Those policies we mentioned, those would become contract language- an agreement between the RRU and the CPSB. They simply cannot be violated without breaking the contract. That's enforceable by law.

St. Tammany Parish teachers and school employees have a contract. They are teachers and school employees just like us. Yet, in their district, for example, faculty meetings are limited to 10 per school year, must be announced 3 days prior and can be no longer than an hour. Teachers and staff can leave campus during their duty-free lunch. Teachers report 5 minutes before student reporting time and leave 10 minutes after dismissal.

Also in St. Tammany, duty is not an arbitrary assignment. Every school has a duty committee who are charged with putting together a duty schedule agreed upon by the staff. When it comes to planning, it must be duty-free and uninterrupted. Additionally, there can be no more than 2 collaborative meetings per week.

These are just a few of the areas we would address in a collective bargaining contract between the RRU and the CPSB. The point we are making is that no one is saying, for example, there should not be planning or faculty meetings. We are saying that employees have professional rights too and should have input into how these functions are implemented.

That is why the RRU voted to seek a contract and the COPE (Committee on Political Education) would not endorse any candidate for the upcoming school board election who did not commit to voting for a Collective Bargaining Contract. A Collective Bargaining Contract will give us a voice in the workplace. Competitive pay and benefits, better working/teaching/ learning conditions help us attract and retain quality employees. There is nothing more important to academic achievement than that. That is who we are. That is what we stand for. It is time for a Contract.

Jackie Lansdale
RRU President

Check Your Check

As you know, the first check(s) of the 2022-2023 school year will be issued this month. We strongly encourage you to check your check. You want to ensure you are being paid the correct amount as well as determine all deductions are the correct amount.

We have had numerous people report there was an issue with their step not increasing for the next year, a degree not added, or their insurance is not being deducted properly. Additionally, we were made aware of some deceptive practices by other organizations enrolling people without their full permission.

If there is an error on your check or if you are unsure about something, please contact us immediately. State law will only reimburse up to three years if you are not being paid correctly. Please check your check at least quarterly to protect your money!

Check your check and prevent an error from occurring for months!

- Step Increase
- Insurance
- Retirement
- Dues Deductions
- Added Degree

-Jordan Thomas - RRU Ex. Vice President
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Red River United Benefits It Pays to Belong!

I feel everyone should belong to a Union in order to support an organization that is there for your benefit. Red River United advocates for its members' salaries, job protection, working conditions, and benefits. I refer to these benefits as "perks" of being a member of Red River United. As a member, I am encouraging you to download our app- UNION PLUS which has various categories of discounts, such as:

Apparel and Accessories

Attractions & Tours

Cellular Phones

Food & Dining

Health & Wellness

Recreation & Entertainment

Movie Tickets

Home & Garden

Financial Services

Gifts & Flowers

Travel

Family & Kids

and many many more. UNION PLUS discounts are available to you wherever you travel because it is location sensitive. I say, join for the advocacy, but enjoy the perks.



[Click Here to Join!](#)

Cedric Choyce

Legislative and Benefits Director, Red River United

NOW Is The Time to Join RRU!

Membership and Organizing Updates

If you were thinking about joining one of the largest unions in the state, NOW is the TIME!

With so much uncertainty day to day in public education, it is VITAL to belong to an UNION that will have your back when it comes to your job, pay, and benefits!

We are currently offering no dues until October 2022 for all new members and you can easily [join by clicking HERE](#) or scanning the QR Code to the right.



We think it is important for our members to have options and input with how their dues are deducted.

There are two options that can be tailored to fit your needs as a member of RRU:

- 1.) Payroll Deduction- Dues will be drafted from your paycheck each pay period
- 2.) ACH/Bank draft

If you are a full time employee in your district, you can elect for payroll deductions. If you are a temporary employee, and you are unsure if you can be payroll deducted, please contact the office and I can help you find the best option for membership.

If you are a current payroll deducted member and you have moved to another district, you will need to rejoin in the district you have moved to. Unfortunately, your dues deductions do not transfer with you. If you are a current member of RRU and you have recently been promoted in your district or hired as a new teacher and you have not updated your information with us, please contact the office so we can discuss any possible changes.

Additionally, if any of your information has recently changed, [please click HERE to many any necessary updates](#). We want to ensure that you are in the “know” for all things happening and we frequently send out emails (personal), text messages, and mailouts!



Use this QR code to
join our members
only Facebook page

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[Check out our website HERE](#)

Follow us on Instagram @redriverunited4995



Union Hacks

Do you have any union hacks that could make the working lives of teachers and staff easier and better? Send us your hack, and if your hack gets chosen, we will publish it and pay you \$25.00!

Email your Union Hack to
redriverunited@redriverunited.org



WHY SHOULD YOU BE A MEMBER?

BENEFITS AUTOMATIC WITH ENROLLMENT:

- Representation (rebuttals, reprimands, grievance, and legal)
- Consultation with our staff- Know Your Rights!
- Access to our Local fully staffed office
- Access to our local attorney
- Free 24- HR Roadside Assistance
- Free identity theft protection
- Free notary services
- \$5,000 Free Life Insurance for your first year of membership



PLUS MUCH MORE:

- Group Disability Coverage
- Budget Truck Rentals
- Mortgage Benefits
- Car Rental Discounts
- AT&T Wireless Discounts
- Hotel Discounts
- Rental Car Discounts

Don't Just Survive Thrive with Educators Thriving

Red River United recognizes that teacher burnout is a real thing. School districts across the country are having trouble retaining teachers; Northwest Louisiana is no exemption. So what do we do about burnout and teacher attrition? That's a tough fix. However, if you have been following us here at Red River United, you know we will try our best to do something about it!

Red River United knows teachers will get as much professional development as one can take. That is why we have partnered with Educators Thriving to provide our members in Bossier, Caddo, and Red River Parishes personal development with concrete strategies to help them avoid and manage the most common pitfalls of the educator experience: being overwhelmed, personal neglect, struggling with a fixed mindset, unexpected challenges, and isolation. Educators Thriving offers research-based personal development to help educators achieve well-being. The Educators Thriving program timeline is six weeks where participants will learn and engage with fellow educators to overcome those contributors to teacher burnout. These meetings are held weekly (on Tuesdays) and are all done virtually via Zoom from 6:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. Not only do participants get information on how to recognize and overcome these pitfalls, but they also get paid to do so! When participants have completed all sessions of the Educators Thriving program, they will be eligible to receive a payout.

The Fall session of Educators Thriving has begun but be sure to follow Red River United on Facebook & Instagram to receive updates on this program's next availability as well as all matters related to teachers and school employees.

For more information on the program, please visit the link below where Educators Thriving's creator, Tyler Hester, gives his inspiration for creating the personal development program and application of Educators Thriving.

<https://vimeo.com/674004310/8cdd0d0571>

Bernard Friday
Regional Director, Red River United

