

Dear Colleagues,

The PAT has been fielding many e-mails from our substitutes so we wanted to reach out to send an update to ensure everyone is getting their questions answered. Guest educators have been emailing us to find out about PPS's plans for the academic year 2020-2021 and continued questions about Oregon Unemployment.

Plans for Next Year

The Oregon Department of Education [Guidance for School Year 2020-2021](#) states that by August 15 all districts across the state must finalize their re-entry plans. Re-entry could range from fully reopened schools, distance learning or a hybrid model. For the past month, the PAT has been in discussions with PPS administration to ensure that whatever model PPS selects, that substitute educators will continue to be employed, either for temporary contracts or short-term, one day assignments as in past years. PAT is also advocating that PPS provide training and professional development so that substitute educators can be successful in an online learning environment.

Both the CDC and [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) have emphasized that teachers expressing Covid symptoms should be excluded from school buildings until the symptoms subside, which may result in a higher demand for substitute educators.

Questions about Unemployment

Our guest educators have also been emailing us their concerns about the continued delays with Oregon Unemployment application processing times. You can use the [Online Claim System](#) to check whether your claim has been processed and the status of each week's payment. Click on the blue box labeled "Status of Your Claim and Weekly Reports." Keep in mind that substitutes may be eligible for unemployment benefits through the new federal program that was recently established for gig workers and other temporary workers. The [Oregon AFL-CIO](#) provides a weekly Zoom workshop that you can attend to learn more about PUA eligibility requirements and application process. The [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#) (PUA) program is [plagued with delays](#) so please be patient when applying for the PUA program.

Health Insurance for Substitutes

Although PPS has expressed strong interest in lowering the number of days worked in the district required to be eligible for health insurance, unfortunately we have still not reached an agreement on this issue. PPS had all but agreed to reducing this eligibility requirement, but made its offer to do so contingent on the PAT agreeing to the unilateral decision to stop paying substitutes any salary in June 2020. This kind of regressive bargaining, we believe, constitutes an Unfair Labor Practice. PAT has filed a complaint and working with legal counsel to attain retroactive payment for all substitutes through the end of the 2019-20 school and a reduction in days to be eligible for health insurance for 2020-21, similar to what they had been offering to do prior to this regressive bargaining. We remain hopeful that we will win this case and will keep you updated as soon as we have additional information.

PAT-paid subscription to Rethinking Schools

For the last several years, PAT has had a bulk subscription to *Rethinking Schools Magazine*. Rethinking Schools is a nonprofit publisher and advocacy organization dedicated to sustaining and strengthening public education through social justice teaching and education activism. **As a benefit to PAT members, we would like to offer all members an opportunity to access *Rethinking Schools Magazine* through a PAT-paid online subscription.**

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Portland Association of Teachers

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