FEA FEDERAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
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Retired News

Information for FEA Retired Members

June/July 2026

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1. What will my pension increase be under FERS? As inflation continues to rise, will your cost-of-living (COLA) increase keep up under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)? There is no COLA if the Consumer Price Index decreases. Under FERS, if the increase is greater than 2% and less than 3%, then the FERS COLA will be capped at 2%. If the increase is 3% or greater, the FERS COLA is 1% less than the increase in the CPI. Also, most FERS retirees will not see the COLA increase until they reach age 62.

2. The Equal COLA Act will create a fairer pension for Federal retirees. The Equal COLA Act is legislation aimed at ensuring that cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) are applied equally to all federal retirees. This act addresses the disparities in COLA increases between different federal retirement systems. This bill, if it becomes law, would provide full COLAs to all federal retirees, ensuring that those under FERS receive the same benefits as those under CSRS. It would help federal retirees maintain their purchasing power in line with inflation, which is crucial for those living on fixed incomes. These bills are currently in committee (HR 866 in the House and S3194 in the Senate).

3. The dismantling of the Department of Education? As of May 6th, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is withheld over $2 billion appropriated in the FY 2026 appropriations act for 35 education programs. The withheld funds includes $235 million for education research, $220 million for teacher preparation and training, $150 million for community schools initiatives, and $139 million for magnet schools. To protect the programs of the Department of Education, take action by visiting: https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center/take-action/tell-congress-stop-destruction-department-education

4. Can one change Federal Employee Health Plans outside of the enrollment period? Annuitants can change FEHB plans every year during the annual open season. However, some situations allow annuitants to switch FEHB plans outside the yearly open season. If you want to keep the same plan but change from family to self-plus one or self-only coverage, or if you want to change from self-plus-one to self-only coverage, you can do that at any time. You may make changes outside the Open Season based on qualifying life events (QLE) such as reaching age 65. Other QLEs include changes in family status such as marriage, birth or death of a family member, adoption, or divorce. Check with the Office of Personnel Management for additional information.

5. Summer Offerings: Here is a quick reminder of several events occurring this summer:

- NEA Retired Annual Meeting June 30/July 1 in Denver (www.nea.org/retired)
- FEA Annual Meeting July 1-2 in Denver (www.feaonline.org)
- NEA Representative Assembly July 3-7 in Denver (www.nea.org/ra)
- DoDDS Reunion July 13-17 near Milwaukee (WI) (https://www.mydoddsreunion.com/)
- NARFE FedCon2026 August 23-25 in Indianapolis (https://fedcon.narfe.org/)