Get involved with your union

Union membership has a few things in common with gym membership – the more you use it, the more you get out of it and the stronger you become.

As a new teacher there is so much new information to absorb that it can be hard to find the time and headspace to learn more about your union.

We've put together some simple suggestions of ways you can get more involved – from the very easy, to a bit heavy! So, if your muscles are still developing, start small and go from there.

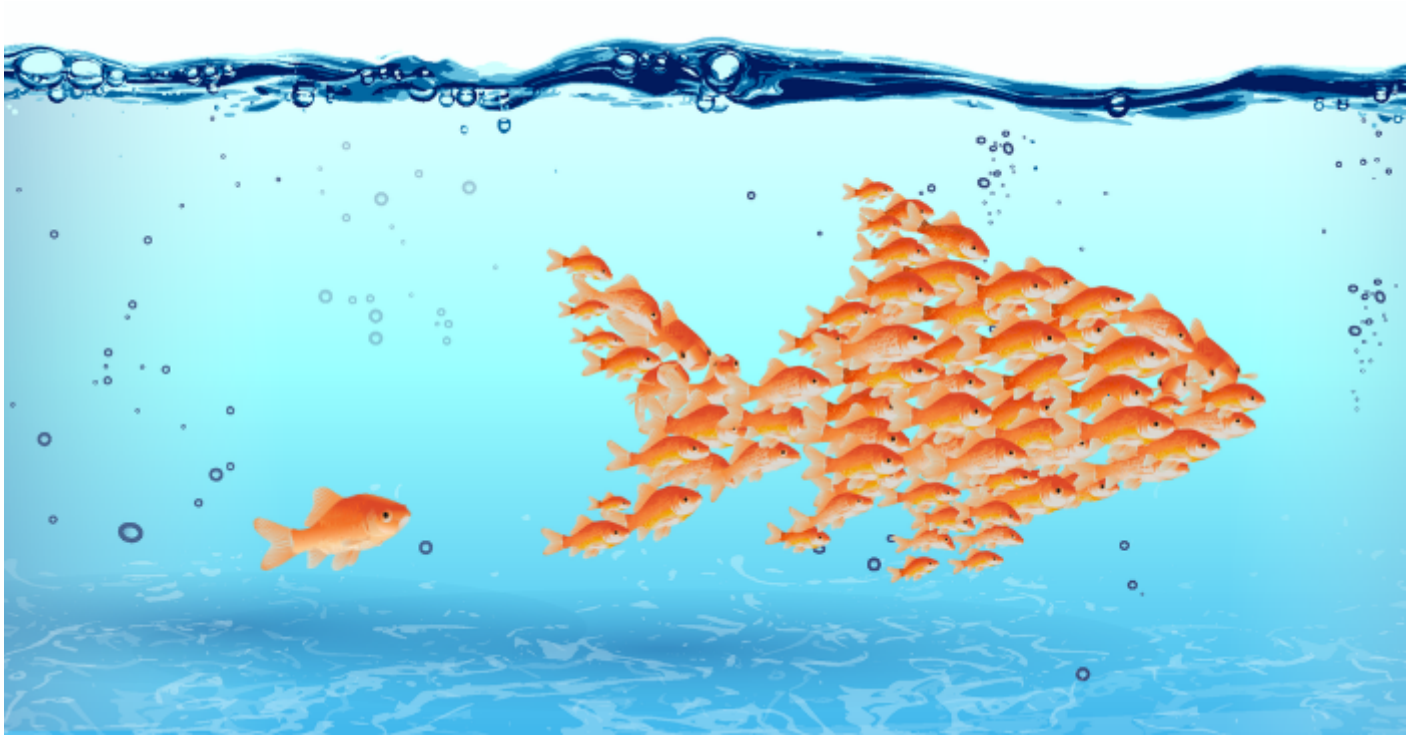
1. **Read *Western Teacher***. This is a great way to keep up to date with what's happening in education and your union – plus, you can tick this one off your list already!
2. **Join the New Educator Network - WA group on Facebook**. You'll get teaching tips, industrial advice and teacher memes delivered straight to your socials feed. Bonus points for introducing yourself in the weekly Friday welcome post.
3. **Use a member benefit**. Your SSTUWA membership provides you with a wealth of different deals and discounts – you can find a list on page 30 of this Western Teacher.
4. **Introduce yourself to your union rep**. Many schools have an elected union rep on staff. If you're not sure who yours is, ask around, check the SSTUWA website or app or give Member Assist a call on 9210 6060. If your school does not have an elected union rep, consider putting your hand up. Contact us for more details.
5. **Wear some SSTUWA merchandise at work**. Email us at neweducator@sstuwa.org.au to request a new educator lanyard pin to be posted out to you. Bonus points if you request one for another new educator member at your workplace!
6. **Attend a branch meeting**. Your school may hold branch meetings on a regular basis, or when needed. Ask your union rep when your next meeting will be held and make time to attend.
7. **Nominate for the State Council Guest Program when applications open later this year**. State Council is the union's highest decision-making body and convenes in June and November every year. Guests can observe proceedings and get involved in workshops aimed at increasing their knowledge. Attending State Council Conference is an awesome opportunity to experience how decisions are made and a great opportunity for networking.
8. **Enrol in an Education and Training Centre course**. Check out the list on page 28 of this edition of Western Teacher.
9. **Have a recruiting conversation**. Have a chat with another new educator or prac student about why you decided to join the union and ask them if they've ever considered it. Did you know that membership for pre-service teachers is free?

Unions are built on the strength and wisdom of their members. It might not always feel easy, but by joining up and joining in, you can feel good about helping to protect public education for the common good.



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Teaching tip

Check for understanding

Checking for understanding allows you to make sure everyone is learning what you are thinking they are learning, and lets you adjust lesson delivery if students are getting lost.

One easy way to check for understanding is the 'thumb-o-meter'. Students could also respond more privately by using mini-whiteboards or by completing an exit card to hand to you at the end of the lesson.

For a more in-depth check, have students create a summary of a particular concept – this could be in the form of a 280-character tweet, one-minute vlog, or letter to their teacher or family explaining what they have learnt.



Do you have a tip we should share?
Email neweducator@sstuwa.org.au



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Communicate with parents

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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