



## **When It Comes to Parents & Attorneys, Special Ed Folks Have Special Needs**

### **1. I have a parent who is being very aggressive but I don't want to "rock the boat."**

*The best advocate for your students is YOU. You are the hired professional the district relies on to make the best decisions for your class. If you don't advocate for the best possible service, who will? If a single parent makes unreasonable demands on your time, are you able to provide the best service to the REST of your class? When you speak, be confident about your own experience and professionalism and trust your instincts. You can tell when something doesn't feel right for you or your students.*

### **2. The parent/attorney is making unreasonable demands on me in my classroom. What should I do?**

*Be careful what you include in the IEP. If the parent asks for something unreasonable (i.e. daily visits to the classroom, daily e-mails, daily phone calls home), do NOT put it in the IEP. Otherwise, you will be bound to it. If an administrator says "Oh, go ahead...we'll just try it," ask them to put their directive in writing and you will consider it. Make sure there is a beginning and ending date. As soon as you receive the directive, call NSEA immediately!*

### **3. Can I have union representation for a meeting with a parent or an attorney or both?**

*YES. You can ALWAYS have union representation whenever you think you need it. You don't have to call the NSEA President or UniServ Rep, you can bring along another NSEA member who you trust to help you take notes and refer to the contract. Don't go into a meeting where you feel unsafe or unsupported. If you feel the meeting is turning abusive toward you, excuse yourself and ask that the meeting be re-scheduled for another time. If you are directed to stay in the meeting, record the incident and contact NSEA immediately.*

### **4. A parent/attorney keeps sending me additional requests for the IEP. I don't have time for this.**

*You're right. You don't. Let them know that when the next IEP meeting is called, you would be happy to place their suggestions on the agenda. (Don't take it upon yourself to call the next IEP meeting. Any member of the team can do that.)*

**5. The district/my principal is afraid of legal action and they are asking me to comply with something that is not good for me or my students. What should I do?**

*Rather than act out of fear or uncertainty, call NSEA and we can ask attorneys hired by the Washington Education Association to give you a legal opinion. That will help you be more prepared for the situation and you can make the best choice for your students.*



**5. I am working with a violent student and I'm worried that I may not be able to protect myself.**

*Assault of an education professional is a crime in Washington state. You should be prepared to report any assault to the police. You are not “doing your student a favor” or “protecting them” by ignoring violent behavior. Call “911” immediately and file a police report.*

*The NESPA Contract (Article 19.40) requires that members receive SAFE training within 3 weeks of their assignment to a student with behavioral disorders. The NSEA Contract states that adequate release time and funding will be provided for teachers working with special ed students who require additional resource (Article 19.5 & others).*

**6. How can I find out if a student has a history of violent behavior toward teachers or students?**

*The NSEA contract requires that all students with a history of violent behavior will be identified to the student's assigned staff or other staff (such as librarians or para-educators) on a need-to-know basis. See NSEA article 31.8 for more information. The NESPA contract requires that members assigned to work directly with a student with an IEP shall have access to a copy of the IEP within 10 working days of the assignment or 5 days of the District's receipt of the IEP.*

**Do you have more questions about Special Education?  
Call your NSEA or NESPA leaders.**

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