



"Don't let it throw you - It's just a negotiating tactic."

**WEA**  
Working Together

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A LITTLE NEGOTIATING HUMOR

IN THIS ISSUE

# It is Negotiation Time!

by Employee Rights and Responsibilities Chair

It is certainly hard to believe but yes, indeed, it is once again time for Negotiations to begin. I thought it might be nice to prepare a few notes on the meaning and importance of negotiations; in other words, I was looking for the purpose in negotiations. What I discovered is rather interesting.

First, negotiations are about proving the value of something. Often, we look at negotiations as an "us" versus "them" kind of deal but the words deal, transaction and relationship may also be utilized. In the best case scenario the ideal working situation would involve a relationship between parties working to create "a fair division and joint burden-sharing" (Cummins: Commitment Matters).

The concept of working in a relationship is key because a relationship is built on trust and a basic understanding of respect.

Just because you are not on the negotiations team does not mean you may not participate in the process. Review your contract and jot down suggestions or ideas you might have regarding segments that are troubling to you. Also, if there are ideas not currently

addressed by our contract then write those suggestions down and submit to your negotiations team.

Please also remember the following points:

1. Negotiations are about bargaining, which means sometimes there have to be compromises.
2. You may not always agree with the final product but that does not mean the process was faulty. Trust in the members of the team to do the best they are able and also trust in the process.
3. Get involved. Offer suggestions, opinions, and ideas.

## What is a Grievance?

A grievance is an allegation or complaint that there has been a violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of the terms and conditions of this Agreement or any complaint alleging improper, arbitrary, capricious or discriminatory enforcement or application of Employer policy, rules, regulations, practices and/or procedures affecting bargaining unit members (NEA)

Not all complaints are legitimate grievances. An employee may have a quite legitimate complaint, but the hardship may not be grievable, as when the classroom has been vandalized or the air conditioning goes on the blink. Note that both the examples above could become grievances if, for instance, management does nothing to rectify them. First, the leader checks the accuracy of the story of the would-be grievant, and then determines whether the incident constitutes a violation of one of the items in the checklist of Reasons For A Grievance. If the alleged violation seems borderline, it should be checked out with more experienced association representatives to determine its validity. A non-grievable complaint may have more to do with personality conflict or acts of nature than with violations of the terms of wages, hours, and working conditions. (MCCC Training Manual)



**"I wish you would come to me first with your grievances, instead of going directly to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights."**

And so to end on a more positive note:



