

527 BOARD-STAFF RELATIONS

The Board recognizes that teachers and other employees of the school district have a dual role in their relations with the public, which complicates decisions from time to time concerning responsibility.

Teachers, especially, may have to decide between their responsibilities as professionals employed by the school system on the one hand or as members of the community on the other when differences of opinion arise concerning goals or operations of the schools.

The Board believes that the First Amendment rights of teachers and other employees must be protected. The Board also believes that the schools and Board should not be subject to unfair, unwarranted or malicious attacks from within.

For employee speech to be protected it must first touch on a matter of public concern. Public concern involves a matter of political, social, or other concern to the community.

Speech that impairs discipline by superiors or harmony among co-workers, has a detrimental impact on close working relationships for which personal loyalty and confidence are necessary, or impedes the performance of the speaker's duties or interferes with the regular operation of the enterprise will not be protected by the First amendment.

To help achieve these goals, the Board instructs the administration to confer and work with employees or employee groups in setting up a procedure for handling differences of opinion between Board and staff which will have at least the following characteristics:

1. Protect each employee's First Amendment rights.
2. Set guidelines for assisting teachers in distinguishing between their professional employee responsibilities and their lay citizen ones.
3. Establish procedures, including arbitration, for handling grievances. The District should consult with counsel before taking any adverse employment action.
4. Provide for channels of communication within the school system to enable employees to have access to policy positions of the Board, regulations of the administration, and prompt notification of events and pertinent facts.

CROSS REF.: 522.6 Freedom of Speech (Professional Staff)
WREA Agreement
AFL-CIO Local 1075 Agreement (Lunch, Custodians and Maintenance)
AFL-CIO Local 95 Agreement (Office and Professional Employees)
Substitute Teachers' Agreement

APPROVED: November 11, 1974

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