September 2015

Secondary Preparation Time

Know Your Rights!

Basic Secondary Teacher Preparation Time Rights

Full-time classroom teachers in secondary schools have the right to five periods of preparation time per week, one period per day, for schools on a six-period school day. The union contract notes that the length of the preparation periods should be approximately equal to the length of other teaching or supervision periods. So for schools with block schedules, an aggregate of five preparation periods per week will suffice. This means that at least about 1/6 of your time across the week needs to be devoted to preparation time.

Preparation Time is Protected Time!

Preparation time should not be used for instruction or supervision of students. However, in the case of an emergency (a situation that could not have reasonably been anticipated), you may be required to use your prep time to cover "a reasonable and equitable" number of classes other than your own when the principal so requests. Emergency class coverage in excess of 1 hour in a school year is to be compensated on a pro-rata (hourly) basis, but in no case less than $43.20/hr. See the KYR flier on Emergency Class Coverage for more information.

What about Prep Time for Non-Classroom Educators?

Nurses, Counselors, Librarians, Speech Language Pathologists, Psychologists, Audiologists, Itinerants, and other non-classroom based educators are an integral and vital part of the education of San Diego's students, and of our union. New language negotiated in 2015, designed to address multiple grievances stemming from the denial of preparation time to these educators, now guarantees that prep time shall be built into these educators' schedules, commensurate with their assignments.

Preparation Time for Visiting Teachers

Visiting Teachers are union members, too. A Visiting Teacher's right to prep time is the same as the union member who they are replacing. For secondary schools with block schedules, if the teacher for whom you are substituting has scheduled prep time on your assignment day, you are entitled to that scheduled prep time. If you are asked to cover another class in the case of an emergency, you are entitled to pay.

Can I work through my prep period?

SDEA does not recommend members give up their rights to a prep, and discourages this practice. There is no contract language specifying the right to work through a prep period for pay, nor how much one would get paid if they volunteered to do so, nor whether one gets paid extra for the prep period on a sick day that they are not at work, among other considerations. That means if a member sets up a voluntary agreement with administration at their site, and their principal decides to go against it, there is no way to file a contract grievance, because no language has been violated! However, if a principal was to mandate anyone work through their prep regularly, it would be a contract violation.

Sources: Collective Negotiations Contract, July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2017 (Sections 8.5.2, 8.7, and 8.9)

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