



# Rocklin Unified School District

## **NEGOTIATION FAQs**

*Facts & answers to questions about labor negotiations*

March 10, 2014

### **Committed to keeping you informed**

Our District is currently in contract negotiations with the Rocklin Teachers Professional Association (RTPA). The Board of Education and district administration believe all stakeholders in the education community should have access to accurate, timely, and complete information. A lot is at stake in these negotiations that will affect students, employees, parents, and our community. Editions of this publication provide facts and answers to frequently asked questions about the collective bargaining process, issues being discussed in negotiations, and District finances. Interested parties can obtain additional information by accessing the district's web site at [www.rocklinusd.org](http://www.rocklinusd.org).

This edition of *Negotiations FAQs* addresses:

## **Professional Conduct and Promoting Union Activities during the Instructional Day**

*This informational piece is designed to give employees, students, and parents some guidance on what teachers may and may not do during the instructional day while labor negotiations are in process.*

### **Q: Can teachers use class time to talk with parents and students about negotiations?**

**A: No, they cannot use instructional time or paid time to advocate union positions.**

State collective bargaining laws protect certain activities by school employees to promote their union's agenda. However, California's Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) has held that employees cannot engage in these activities during their work time. Employees who do can be disciplined. A teacher may not discuss "work to rule" with students, parents or their colleagues during class time nor can they inform students about what they may or may not do as a result of the work to rule campaign. They cannot urge parents or students during the instructional day to contact the school board or district administration about negotiations. RTPA labor negotiations cannot be discussed with students — even in civics, government or social studies classes — because it is not part of the approved curriculum. Of course, teachers may have these conversations outside of their workday or during duty-free periods. Parent conferences cannot be used to talk about labor contracts with parents. It is not appropriate to mention or discuss labor negotiations matters with parents on campus at district events like Back-to-School Nights and Open House.

### **Q: Can union organizers interrupt class time or prep periods to discuss issues with teachers?**

**A: No, union leaders and organizers can only contact teachers at school during duty-free lunch periods and after the instructional day.**

The district allows the union to have designated bulletin boards at each district facility and to place union materials in employee mailboxes. Teachers may engage in union activities outside of work time but cannot have their instructional day interrupted by union leaders. Preparation periods are instructional time even

though teachers are not in direct contact with students. That time is for collaboration with their colleagues and administrators on curriculum and instructional practices, grading papers, preparing lessons, phoning or meeting with parents, and participating in instruction-based activities.

**Q: Can teachers send home with their students a letter to parents explaining their union's position?**

**A: No, that is inappropriate.**

Teachers are allowed to wear union buttons and non-disruptive clothing such as t-shirts at work. They may have union posters displayed inside their cars in district parking lots.

However, union materials cannot be posted in classrooms, and teachers cannot be using home-to-school communications as a vehicle to disseminate union literature or to convey their union's arguments to parents. It is also inappropriate to use the district e-mail system, School Messenger, teacher websites, or other district notification systems for conducting union business or discussing labor issues with colleagues.

Teachers also cannot use district resources like copiers and supplies to create communication pieces advocating for their union's demands. They may not access student records to obtain parent addresses. That is a violation of both state and federal student records privacy laws.

Teachers are allowed to conduct informational picketing in front of school facilities. However, they cannot be on school grounds when they are handing out leaflets or picketing. They cannot block driveways or hallways that parents, staff and students use for access to the campus. They cannot create an unsafe or threatening environment for students walking to and from school. They cannot put leaflets on windshields in school parking lots.