Organizing Center for Legal Services and Member Advocacy

"Ten Best Practices In A Virtual Learning Environment"

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the classroom environment. The following are ten best practice recommendations for members who are concerned about their new virtual classrooms.

1. **Treat the virtual classroom like a real classroom at all times:** An educator should assume that their classroom may be monitored by an administrator or a parent. If there is a complaint made against a teacher, the administration may attempt to use a complaint or a recording in a teacher's evaluation or in an administrative proceeding.

2. **Respond to any memoranda or reprimands regarding your virtual classroom in ten working days or less**: If you have any concerns about your virtual classroom environment, communicate with your administrator as soon as possible and document their responses. If you receive any criticism or negative feedback in writing about your employment performance, **respond in writing.** A reprimand may impact your formal evaluation and may be used in a termination or nonrenewal proceeding.

3. **Teachers may be held responsible for their virtual classroom environment:** Make sure that any sign or picture on display behind you is appropriate for your students to view. Avoid having anything on display that could be construed as inappropriate or offensive. Make sure that your Google Classroom or other online meeting platforms also contain age appropriate images and links.

4. **Do not allow unauthorized individuals to instruct or monitor your in-person or virtual students**: Do not share your meeting passcodes with anyone who would not normally have access to your classroom.

5. **Become familiar with the Student Code of Conduct and/or applicable school district policies for students:** Communicate with your administrator in advance on the protocol to remove any student who is being continuously disruptive or acting inappropriately. A teacher may be able to utilize Chapter 37 for this purpose.

6. **Communicate with parents on a regular basis to limit classroom interruptions:** Use designated times during your workday to schedule parent-teacher conferences or to communicate with a parent via phone or email. Use a school district email or texting platform when appropriate.

7. **Use your school district equipment for school district purposes only:** Do not use your school district technology or Wi-Fi to conduct personal business for any reason.

8. **Protect student information:** Do not discuss a student's confidential information with a parent in front of other students or parents. Follow all school district safety protocols regarding technology to help safeguard student and district information.

9. **Do not use your personal email account for school district business:** Store work-related information in accordance with your school district's practices, policies and/or procedures.

10. **Follow all mandatory reporting requirements:** If you have cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected by any person, follow the mandatory reporting procedures.