



*Keep Calm  
And Call  
The AEA Office*

## WHO SHOULD YOU CALL?

Understanding the **Roles and Responsibilities of the AEA President and UniServ Director.**

Every day the AEA Office receives calls from both Members and Non-Members. It's important to understand that membership has its privileges and advice pertaining to your employment is NOT free. If a Non-Member calls, with a concern, we encourage them to join their professional association, but **that membership and advocacy is not "retro-active"** in nature and the AEA cannot address anything that happened prior to their membership application. When a new APS employee is hired and they join, their membership is immediate. Yet, when an APS employee joins after the initial 90 days of employment, membership is immediate, but they are not eligible for "legal" representation and must wait 30 days. Although we'd like to help everyone, it would not be fair to our loyal dues paying members. It's like homeowner's insurance. You can't apply for homeowner's insurance once the house is flooded or burned down ... it doesn't work that way.

When members call with a straightforward, non-emergency, member rights question Alysha will gather as much information necessary to direct the call. Sometimes it's as easy as looking up a policy that is hard to find or unfamiliar on the APS Website. You're too busy and your time is too precious to try and navigate the APS School Board PIP's. Many times, we know exactly where to look and if not, will forward along to personal emails as soon as possible.

When a concern involves contracts, salary, benefits, requests to meet with your administration, Performance Improvement Plans, Evaluation, Investigation, Disciplinary Actions, Termination, etc.... the member is directed to the UniServ Director. **Kelly, by APS Policy, is the recognized "Association Representative"** and is also protected by a comprehensive insurance policy and is bonded. Long short, anything you share with her is CONFIDENTIAL and will not be shared with anyone unless permission is given by the member. Kelly will explain the process, options, outcomes, and guide you through whatever situation is involved. Believe me, her position is not to judge, but to protect your rights and interests and your continued or future employment.

Ingrid's **role is AEA President.** She is the "Voice" of the Association. She serves as the AEA advocate on numerous committees and community advisory councils, addresses the school board, and meets with Kelly and the Superintendent in what is referred to as Meet and Confer where setting competitive Salary, Time, and Benefits on behalf of all APS employees are discussed. Ingrid, although a 25-year veteran of APS, is not the "recognized" advocate on members' rights issues. She is not covered by the same confidentiality protections **and is not bonded.** She is however your President and strives to ensure member advocacy and representation through working collaboratively with Kelly.

Some things in life **aren't GRIEVABLE**. Sadly enough. This includes: Salaries or benefits, Non-renewal of probationary employees, Failure to promote, Policy, Procedures, Rules and Regulations, Reductions in force, Hiring, Transfer or Assignment, Suspension from duties in emergencies and School division operations.

**What is GRIEVABLE you ask?** A Grievance is "A complaint or dispute by an employee relating to his or her employment." VA Code 22.1-306. It is a formal mechanism to resolve employment disputes such as: Disciplinary actions/Terminations, Reprimands, Discrimination and Failure to comply with APS Policy, Rules and Regulations. Most concerns are resolved without formally filing a grievance.

So ... when should I call the AEA Office? You **NEED** to call the office **IMMEDIATELY** if any of the following occur. Our assistance is limited if you call **AFTER** these examples have occurred:

- You're being disciplined, or believe a disciplinary action could take place
- You're contacted by Child Protective Services or the Police Department
- A student or parent threaten you
- You're placed on a Performance Improvement Plan
- You need clarification on APS Policies and Regulations
- Human Resources requests a meeting or you're referred to HR for a meeting
- You believe you have grounds for a grievance
- Anytime you need advice on an employment related matter

Many times, your administrator or supervisor requests a meeting. If the meeting is not "Disciplinary" nature and is "Informational" you do **NOT** have the right to representation. So ... what do you do?

- Ask the topic of the meeting and who will be attending (preferably by email)
- Allow the supervisor to speak and lead the conversation, rather than trying to respond or argue
- Respond to direct questions and if you need time to respond, ask to prepare a response later
- If you're asked to sign a document, it does not mean you agree with it. It means you've received it.
- Prepare a detailed summary of the meeting and take notes accordingly and send a copy to Kelly for further assistance.

**IF at any point in time you perceive the meeting has evolved into what could lead to Disciplinary action, respectfully request that the meeting be rescheduled** so that representation can be present. Many times, just knowing your rights and expectations will empower you through many situations or concerns.

Don't hesitate to call upon us,



Ingrid Gant and Kelly Byrd,  
President and UniServ Director