Evaluations are a fact of life for teachers. Fortunately, one of the rights afforded to unions is to be able to negotiate over evaluations. But, it has to be faced, the evaluation process is still largely slanted toward administrators. It’s not completely one-sided, but administration has most of the leverage. Let’s look at the process first to see what can be done.

Timelines are one place where FTA can get a little wiggle room. The first date on the timeline is to be notified you will be evaluated. The contract says we have to be notified in the first two weeks of the year if we are going to be evaluated. That timeline begins the first day we return to work and ended August 17. That means you have 20 days, or until September 17 to file a grievance if you were not notified by August 17th that you would be evaluated this year.

Note: You MAY NOT wait until you receive your final evaluation and then grieve not being notified in the first two weeks. Article 17. Grievance states that you have 20 days from the violation or when you reasonably should have known of the violation. Not knowing the contract is NOT a reasonable excuse for not knowing of the violation. The moral of that story? You need to know your contract. Therefore, you must initiate the grievance process within 20 days of admin missing the timeline. This is crucial if you want your grievance to be upheld.

The next timeline is that your evaluating administrator must hold a conference with you by the end of the 4th week of school (this year, August 31) to discuss the Standards and Key Elements that will be used in your evaluation. This is where you pick one Standard, the administrator picks one and the two of you agree on one additional. Then, you pick two Key Elements per Standard and the administrator picks one. This all happens DURING the conference. Also during the conference, you and the evaluator discuss what evidence and teaching strategies will be used to measure your success within the Key Elements.

After the conference, the evaluator will write a conference summary that will memorialize your discussion, and complete the evaluation document for you to sign. This must be given to you within 10 (working) days following the conference.

If you didn’t have a Standards and Key Elements conference by the end of the 4th week of school, then you have until October 1st to grieve it. If you didn’t get your conference summary given to you within 10 days of the meeting, then you would have 20 (working) days to initiate a grievance for that.

By now, the process should be clear. If there is a timeline and the administrator misses it, you have 20 days from that point to initiate the grievance. Don’t wait!

Article 9.6.2 specifies the timelines for Probationary members. I suggest you look at the contract (available at www.fontanateachers.org) and note the deadlines on your calendar. Article 9.7.2 has the same information for Permanent members.

After the Standards and Key Elements conference, the next step of the process is the observation, or observations. Permanent members only get one observation. Probationary members get three. The administrator must sit in the classroom and observe for at least 30 minutes. Then, they prepare your evaluation and hold a conference with you to discuss it. Within 10 days following the conference, they must give you a copy of the final evaluation document.

Administrators can use anything they observe during any formal or informal observation. It must be documented. No unsubstantiated comments may be used in the evaluation. But, if they do a walkthrough of your room and witness something, they can include that in your evaluation, as long as they document it. Some people think they can only use information from your formal observation, but that’s not true. They can also include in the final evaluation document any information they gain during your conference with them.

Another common misconception for Permanent members if how often they can be evaluated. The short answer is, we can be evaluated every single year of our employment with the district, if they desire. They simply must notify us. However, if a member receives an overall “Distinguished” mark then administrators don’t need to evaluate them for up to five years. Similarly, if a member receives a “Proficient” overall mark on two consecutive evaluation cycles, then they also don’t require evaluation for five years.

But, the bottom line is they can evaluate us any year they want.

Even though the evaluation process is weighted toward administrators, bargaining unit members are not powerless. We grieve over timelines, certainly. A missed timeline is absolutely a basis for a grievance and a likely win for us. Another weak point is documentation. Comments made in the evaluation document should also be reflected in the observation document. So, we encourage all members to make sure to read over the observation notes the administrator provides to you for accuracy. Cross check it against the evaluation document as well.

All of that being said, ideally you will have an evaluator who wants to be fair to you and is truly dedicated to the idea that the evaluation process is designed to foster improvement in your craft. It should be cooperative and your evaluator should be encouraging your professional development. Our contract provides that evaluations should primarily function to give us food for thought and show us the way to become better educators. But, when this isn’t the case, follow the guidelines I’ve discussed and get in touch with an FTA rep as soon as you realize there’s an issue.

Wishing all members a spectacular September,

Curtis
Do I Need a Rep?

BY: Connie Verhulst

You go to your mailbox at lunch time and there is a note from your admin – “come see me after school” – you immediately wonder what your admin could want to see you about on such short notice. Should you bring a rep? The note leaves no clue as to what the meeting is about. Maybe your admin has information about one of your students. Maybe your admin wants to submit your name for a district committee. Maybe your admin just wants to check in. Or maybe your admin wants to talk to you about a parent complaint. Or maybe a student is accusing you of wrong doing.

You have every right to ask. Ask what the meeting is about. If admin will not tell you, ask if you need a representative.

If the answer is:
1. Yes
2. Maybe
3. Not sure

Then bring a representative.

Case law, NLRB v. Weingarten (1975) allows for representation in investigative interviews. This is known as your Weingarten Rights. But there are many who do not bring representation with them because:

1. “I have a good relationship with my administrator and do not want to compromise it.”
2. “I do not want the administrator to feel uncomfortable.”
3. “I do not want to overwhelm my administrator by having another person there.”
4. “My administrator has always been good to me, so I was not worried.”
5. “My administrator told me it was not necessary.”

And many other reasons.

Let’s go back to getting the note in your mailbox – “come see after school today.” You ask what the meeting is about and are told you will find out when you get there. You ask if you need representation and are either not given an answer or the answer is not clear.

The first thing you can do is postpone the meeting. The contract states in 14.6.1.3 states that 24 hour prior notice is to be given when a conference with administrators occurs. You have the right to have time to get representation.

Next, do not think for a moment that you are doing your administrator any favors not bringing a representative. You are certainly not doing yourself any favors. Perhaps in the end, a representative was not needed, but it never hurts to have a second set of ears there. This always prevents miscommunication.

Let’s say you decide to go by yourself because, well, you know your administrator and there has never been an issue. Once you get there, you discover the meeting does feel disciplinary. Now what? The meeting has already started; it would be rude to stop it. Would it be rude to stop it? Absolutely not.

You have every right to stop the meeting and ask that it continue when you have representation. This may mean the meeting is rescheduled.

Never feel uncomfortable in a meeting by yourself. Again, having someone there prevents miscommunication.
September brings Labor Day and our yearly reflection on unions and organized labor. Sure, for most people, Labor Day is the “last weekend of Summer,” a time to get a BBQ in, or watch a game. But, for the working class and working professionals who are in unions, it means more.

Normally in this space, we discuss grievances and the process of grieving as allowed by collective bargaining. But, this month, it seemed appropriate to put Grievance in a more reflective light.

Negotiating over working conditions is the primary purpose of any labor union. Grievance is the “right hand” of Negotiations. Our Negotiations team meets with the District Negotiations Team to discuss wages, benefits, hours, and any other aspects of the employer-employee relations. Grievance’s part in this is to sometimes test the contract, or to bring to attention an aspect of the contract that needs to be re-written, or even something that is missing in the contract. For example, recently we found that some parts of the evaluation process didn’t adequately address issues for educators in our district that weren’t in the classroom. This has led Negotiations to begin exploring how to provide a framework for those members’ evaluations.

While working my way through college, I had a job as a teller in a bank where I worked for 4 1/2 years. Overall, it wasn’t bad. But, in the 1990’s President Clinton passed a law that said all full time workers had to be given health benefits. So, the bank immediately dropped all of us tellers to 35 hours per week. We all shrugged. What are you going to do? If we had been unionized, we could have negotiated, or grieved if it had already been negotiated. But, as it was, we were out of luck. We were working almost full time, but not getting any health insurance. Many of us were young but there were some older tellers, too. When the bill passed, I remember being excited that I would have health insurance, only to find that it wasn’t to be, after all.

I also remember raises were few and far between. Once per year, we would get a review. The manager would offer some amount, a dollar, maybe less, per hour, as a raise over our current pay. Take it or leave it. I took it. What could I do? I was afraid if I asked for more, I would have my hours cut further. I checked out other banks, and they were doing the same thing so it wouldn’t have helped to work at a different bank.

It would have helped a lot if I had had access to a union. Union membership across the nation has been declining for years. And, with the recent Supreme Court ruling in favor of Janus, the atmosphere for unions gets less and less hospitable. People seem to forget that the gains unions made in fighting for workers’ rights were paid for with literal blood. Businesses hate unions because they cost money. But, the costs are things like salary, health insurance, and reasonable work hours and duties.

We’ve all had jobs where the boss asked for more and more under the same compensation. Certainly not all employers are like that. Take Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream, for instance. They have a commitment to fair employment. If all employers were like that, then we wouldn’t need unions. But, they are not. And that’s why we need unions.

I am proud to be in this union. The strength of the union comes from the members, not the Negotiations or Grievance Teams. Obviously, members are on those teams, but it is all of us, together, in solidarity, that lend the Teams the strength and power to sit at the table with the bosses and insist on our rights. There were people fighting in FTA before I got here and there will be, hopefully, those who fight after I’m gone. The union isn’t some vague concept. It is people, working together, to protect each other. It is us.

I hope you, too, will take some time to reflect on what life would be like without your union. And, then, remind yourself to vote in November for candidates who support unions and support you.
LEARN HOW TO APPLY FOR A CTA GRANT TO FUND A PROJECT FOR YOUR CLASS.

IFT GRANT WRITING

FONTANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
INSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH
3:45PM-5:45PM
LOCATION:
F.T.A. OFFICE - 16850 SEVILLE AVE., FONTANA, CA 92335
OPEN TO ALL F.T.A. MEMBERS
R.S.V.P. (909)829-0950
### F.T.A. EMAIL ADDRESSES

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>FTA Pres, Curtis Dison</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:social@fontanateachers.org">social@fontanateachers.org</a></td>
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### MOVED RECENTLY? NAME CHANGE?  

Please email the F.T.A. Office at:  

ftaoffice@fontanateachers.org  

With your updated membership information.  

Thank you!
HELP SUPPORT FONTANA SANTAS

WE ARE AT 2% OF OUR GOAL. THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY DONATED!

Please consider donating at least one toy to support this cause. You can drop off your toy donation at the union office or give it to your site rep to bring to the next Rep Council meeting.
FYI

September 14
October 12
November 9
December 7
January 11
February 8
March 8
April 12
May 3

TGIF DATES
Pancho Villa’s

September 12
October 10
November 14
December 12
January 16
February 13
March 13
April 10
May 8

REP COUNCIL
FTA Office

Search for:
“FTA Members Only Page”

Fontana Teachers Association
16850 Seville Ave.
Fontana, CA  92335
ftaoffice@fontanateachers.org
Phone (909) 829-0940
Fax (909) 829-0466
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FTA’s Discount Code: KBFFFTA
Connie's Corner

Well, a month has gone by
It has been interesting, I cannot lie

I love my class, but they are a handful
No worries, this year I have a goal

And I know I will achieve it with ease
Once I set my mind on something, it is a breeze

One day at a time and ignore the negativity
Stay the plan and focus on all the positivity

Remember students are our number one goal
We play an important every day role

Let them know you care no matter how hard it might be
Find the good in everything and it is easy to see

That the school year goes by in a flash
It will be over in a dash
F.T.A. Hispanic Heritage Month Visual Arts Contest

September 15th to October 15th

Theme: "One endless voice to enhance our traditions."

Check your email for contest rules, rubric, and deadlines.
LEARN ABOUT YOUR UNION MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

FONTANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
INSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2018
3:45PM-5:45PM

LOCATION: F.T.A. OFFICE
16850 SEVILLE AVE., FONTANA, CA 92335

PLEASE R.S.V.P. (909) 829-0950
goodbye summer

HELLO
SEPTEMBER

Time for the next...

F.T.A. Member Giveaway

- Keurig Coffee Maker
- Over 100 Coffee & Tea K-Cups
- Stylish Containers for your K-Cups

“LIKE” this picture every time it is posted on the official F.T.A. Facebook page for a chance to win! Last day to enter is September 20, 2018. Winner will be announced on September 21, 2018.
appetizers provided
giveaways
drinks on your own

F.T.A. MEMBERS ONLY
T.G.I.F.

Friday, September 14th
3pm-5pm

Pancho Villa's Restaurant
Juniper Ave./Valley Blvd., Fontana
Attention Teachers...

Now is the time to buy or refinance your home with CalPATH

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- Reduced Processing and Underwriting Fees
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