



HACK'S FLACK By Gary Hack...AEA President

By nature, most teachers – both individually and as a group – are very trusting people. By definition, you are pretty much in that group. Professionally, you often automatically assume and believe that information given to you is accurate, things happen logically, and everything is going to work out just fine. Educationally, you feel that everyone is on the same page, order reigns, and the “powers-that-be” have all the right answers.

Alas ... if that were only true. Unfortunately, we see mistakes, “oops,” mea culpas and exceptions to the rule more often than we want to admit or accept. Whether it is in the classroom atmosphere, at our sites, or at the district level, “stuff” happens.

Not that it's intentional. Certainly not! It's simply a modern day by-product of very busy people doing a whole lot of work in a compressed time frame to the very best of their abilities with constant interruptions and distractions. It's certainly no one's “fault,” rather it is probably just “the nature of the beast” as it were in today's educational world.

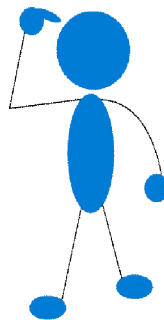
However, as a result of that reality which exists, think about these strategies to protect yourself:

1. **DOCUMENT EVERYTHING:** Put it in writing. Be professional, non-judgmental and timely. Do it in your own handwriting; use the computer only as a backup. Use your documentation, if necessary, and then keep it somewhere safe and accessible in case you ever need to revisit the situation or one like it.
2. **NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING:** Put your trust in yourself. Check out what is happening, what isn't happening, and what should be happening. “They” don't always do what you think they will do, for whatever reason. Ask for information in writing and keep it. Keep following up until

resolution, understanding and agreement are reached.

3. **UPDATE REGULARLY:** Things change. Records aren't always accurate, updated or adjusted in an accurate or timely fashion. You have the absolute right to have current, correct information provided upon request. You have the right and opportunity to look at any and all site and district records that pertain to you. Take advantage of those rights ... whenever. And, don't feel guilty for asking or looking.

The ultimate responsibility ... and opportunity ... and right rests on your shoulders. Don't abdicate it.



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