

Action Line

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Keep your interactions with students safe!

Every year, VEA represents members who have been accused by students or parents of inappropriate behavior. Most of the time these accusations are unfounded—usually they're the result of actions being misinterpreted by the student and unintended by the teacher.

While it's never possible to completely eliminate the chance of being falsely accused of wrongdoing, there are some things you can do to minimize the risk.

Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, etc.

- Never "friend" students on your social networking site.
- If you choose to "friend" former students, they should be over 18 and have graduated.
- Think about what you post on your site. Would you want your students to have this information?
- Same thing for posting a photo. Would you want it circulating around your classroom?
- Avoid giving your personal e-mail address to your students. Use your district email.
- Keep e-mail communications brief and related only to school issues. Print out copies and save them for your records.
- Communicate with the idea that whatever you write should be able to be read by your students' parents and your administrator.
- If you give out your home or cell phone number for parents to reach you, make it very clear that students are not allowed to call you.

- Do not text students.
- If a student sends you an inappropriate text or e-mail, notify your administrator right away.

Interacting with students

- Touch only "safe" areas such as shoulders, arms, and upper back.
- **NEVER** touch a student while disciplining or redirecting him/her.
- Touch all students, male and female, in the same manner.
- Keep touching very brief, such as a pat on the back.
- Avoid initiating hugs with students.
- Keep hugs quick and, if possible, make them a side hug.
- Be sensitive to students who react negatively to being touched.

Verbal communications

- Talk to all students in the same manner.
- Avoid comments that might be interpreted by others as being sexist or sexual in nature.
- Avoid using sarcasm. It can easily be misinterpreted.
- Avoid "good-natured" joking that could be taken the wrong way.
- Compliment students on school-related performance rather than on physical characteristics (such as outfits or hairstyles).

In your classroom

- Try not to be alone with a student.
- If this is unavoidable, make sure your door is open and that you're visible to others walking by.

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Minority Leadership Training conference

WEA's annual Minority Leadership Training conference will be held on Friday evening, October 28, and all day Saturday, October 29. The conference will take place at WEA headquarters in Federal Way.

This is an opportunity for WEA members of color to increase their effectiveness as educators and leaders at the classroom level, building level, VEA level, and state level. We all know that when it comes to increasing classroom and building effectiveness in order to close the statewide opportunity gaps, it is all about leadership.

VEA will pay the registration fee (\$50) for the first five members who wish to attend. [Click here for more information](#) and the registration form.

Attention Plan 3 members

Attention all Plan 3 members: Your allocations for self-directed funds are changing!

If you have money in the self-directed funds of a TRS/SRS/PERS Plan 3 account, you may want to contact someone for guidance about changes you should make. Automatic changes will take place on October 28. However, these changes are not irrevocable.

Plan 3 members should have received notice directly from the retirement system.

If you are not already working with a financial planner, Cassie Johnson from Valic is a WEA-endorsed planner who will be happy to provide you with a free consultation and guidance on changes you should make. She can be reached at Cassie.Johnson@Valic.com, or you can phone her at 360-901-9063.

Keep your interactions with students safe!

- If you're in a portable and have to be alone with a student, tell another staff member and ask him/her to drop by unannounced.
- Keep windows, especially in your door, free from obstructions so other staff members have a clear view of your classroom from outside in the hallway.
- Be aware of spending unequal amounts of time with individual students.

Outside of school

- Never invite students to non-school sponsored events.
- If a student invites you to an event, make sure the parents will be there before you accept.
- If you run into a student outside of school, keep any conversation brief.
- If you do private tutoring, make sure a parent or other adult is around. Do not tutor your own students.
- Never transport a student alone in your vehicle unless it's an absolute emergency.
- It's never a good idea to meet with students outside of school.

Do you need an attorney?

WEA provides members with attorney services at a discounted hourly rate for personal legal matters that are not employment related.



Participating attorneys will provide each member with two 30-minute consultation

sessions during each school year period. These two free consultations are taken separately and deal with two different questions.

This benefit allows you to discuss your problem with an attorney to determine whether you need additional legal services. (Some restrictions may apply.)

If you do need additional services and your problem falls within any of the areas listed below, the attorney's fees are discounted 30 percent:

- Real estate matters
- Wills and estates
- Domestic relations
- Consumer protection
- Traffic violations (including DUI)

The participating attorney in our area is **Grant Broer, 8904 N.E. Hazel Dell Ave., 576-7947**. When calling, please identify yourself as a VEA member.

NEA member benefits

NEA member benefits offers a wide variety of discounts, programs, and information to members. Take a few minutes to go to their website. You will find information about auto insurance, auto purchase discounts, homeowners information, and so much more. Go to the NEA member benefits page, www.neamb.com, and look around. While you're there, enter to win an Apple iPad 2.



Do you have personal problems?

Is daily stress getting to you or a family member? As a district employee, you and your immediate family have access to the district's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

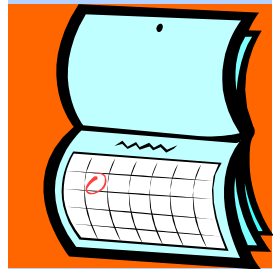
This confidential program is designed to assist employees and their dependent family members with financial stresses; marriage, family, or parenting issues; relationship problems; drinking or drug use concerns; job difficulties; burnout; or any mental or emotional stress.



The district contracts with Solutions Employee Assistance to provide up to six one-hour sessions per family member per school year. Participation is entirely voluntary and confidential, and neither the district nor your coworkers will have any knowledge of your request for help.

If you could use assistance, call 696-5092 for an appointment. Solutions Employee Assistance is located at Memorial Health Center, 3400 Main Street.

Calendar items



- October 4
Rep Council
5:00, Gaiser
- October 10
Executive Board
5:00, VEA office
- October 14-15
Pre-retirement seminar
- October 18
VEA social
- October 24
VEA committees
- November 1
Rep Council
5:00, Gaiser
- November 7
Executive Board
5:00, VEA office
- November 11
Veterans Day
- November 15
VEA social
- November 23-25
Thanksgiving break
- December 6
Rep Council
5:00, Gaiser
- December 12
Executive Board
5:00, VEA office
- Dec. 19-Jan. 2
Winter break