



## SFUSD Paraprofessionals: Important Advice From Your Union

### 2011 – 2012 School Year

- **What is a Union?** A union is a group of workers who band together to try to achieve things they want – fair treatment, better wages and benefits and working conditions, and to prevent their employer from doing things to them that they don't want – arbitrary treatment, unjust treatment . A union is not an insurance agency; it is an instrument of collective action and its purpose is to advance our interests by us working together.
- **What is a Contract?** A union contract is a legal document that specifies the wages, hours and conditions of work for those covered by that contract. In a conceptual sense, it is a snapshot of the balance of forces between the employer and the workers - here between the school district administration and the membership. The contract is a living document – the language doesn't mean anything until and unless it is enforced. If you think that there is a violation of your or your colleagues' contractual rights, call it to the attention of your Union Building Representative or Union Staff Representative. Don't wait; there are time limits within which contract violations must be raised or management will not consider them.
- **Membership:** Only active members have political rights within UESF and access to Union Member benefit programs, including legal representation. If you are not a member, complete an application form and return it to UESF. Non-members still have to pay monthly union service fees.
- **Documents You Get:** Keep a copy of all documents that SFUSD or your Principal gives you in a binder in chronological order. It is important to keep them in a coherent fashion.
- **Documents You Give:** Keep a copy of all documents you give to SFUSD. When giving them documents, always have proof that they have received them. Certified mail with return receipt is one way. If delivering in person, take two copies to Human Resources and get them both date/time stamped – one copy for them and one for you. If faxing, the first sheet should be your document and the last should be your cover sheet. This is a way of having a proof sheet with the document's image on it. Check your personnel file at least once a year.
- **Health Benefits:** Paras who work 40 hours per pay period and Special Ed core subs shall receive benefits in accordance with Article 13 of the USP contract. Part-time paras have the option to accept partial benefits.
- **Pay Stubs:** Check your pay stubs upon receipt and keep them organized in a safe place. Make sure you are getting paid for the right status and the right pay rate. You will be paid every other Wednesday.

- **Longevity Paras:** If you have worked 10 years in the District, you are entitled to the “Longevity” rate. Check your pay stub.
- **Email:** Get a personal email account separate from one assigned by the SFUSD. SFUSD can read your District email account and can control its use. Free personal email accounts are available from Hotmail, Yahoo, Google, etc. Tell UESF what your email address is so you can keep informed. Send your email address to UESF at: [ask-uesf@uesf.org](mailto:ask-uesf@uesf.org).
- **Your MD For On-The-Job Injury or Illness:** Turn in a signed “Predesignation of Personal Physician” form for work-related injuries or illness now. If you do not do this, and have a work-related injury or illness, you will have to see the SFUSD-designated doctor instead of your own medical provider for at least 30 days..
- **If you get sick or hurt on the job:** If you have a work-related injury or illness, report this immediately to your Principal. If you have trouble dealing with the SFUSD workers’ compensation administrator, TriStar, you may need a workers’ compensation attorney. We suggest that you use Michelle Brodie, 415 861-5537. Workers’ comp attorneys are paid on a contingency fee basis, typically 12% to 15% of what is awarded.
- **Your Rights:** Your rights under the UESF/SFUSD contract and applicable Labor Law take precedence over Board of Education Policies and Principal’s statements. You have a right to union representation when you meet with an administrator. Talk to your Union Building Representative. Do not go in by yourself. If that does not work out, contact UESF.
- **Probation:** Probationary period is a twelve (12) month period. It is a six month period in the case of a promotive position, excluding temporary, limited term, restricted, casual, substitute or as-needed employment.
- **Grievances:** A grievance is an assertion that the employer has not followed the contractual requirements. The grievance process, which is at Article 18 of the Paraprofessionals’ Contract specifies the timelines and procedures to address grievances. The way that we can enforce our contractual rights is through the grievance procedure. Article 18 of the Paraprofessionals’ Contract explains what the process and timelines are for grievances. It should be noted that not every problem is a contract violation. The perceived injustice may have a potential legal remedy, a potential political solution or no solution at all. Again if you have questions, consult your Union Building Representative or Union Staff Representative. It should almost go without saying that relying on administrative representatives for contract interpretations is problematic.
- **Prop A:** 9 hours of continuing education (Professional Development) at a rate of \$19.00 per hour. In addition, a \$250 flat salary allocation annually to be paid in the last paycheck in November.
- **Furlough Days:** There will be four (4) furlough days this school year. The dates are February 17, 2012, March 16, 2012, April 6, 2012, May 29, 2012.

## Collective Bargaining Rights

Knowing our collective bargaining agreement with SFUSD is one of the most important elements to navigating your way through the district. (Go to [www.uesf.org](http://www.uesf.org), where there is a link to the contract.) We suggest that you focus first on the following provisions:

### Article 15: Health and Safety

- Article 15.1.1: You are not required to work in unsafe conditions.  
Article 15.3.2: The District will provide each classroom with a first-aid kit.  
Article 15.3.6: You do not have to live with unwanted rodents and vermin in your workspaces.

**Article 7: Evaluation** The contract does not allow for grieving the content of the evaluation, so paying close attention to correct procedure is very important. If the timelines are violated, let your Union Field Rep know immediately.

**Article 18: Grievance Procedure** This is how contract violations are addressed. A grievance must be filed within 15 working days of the occurrence of the problem.

**Appendix E: Union Building Committee** The administrator must meet with the Union Building Committee about staffing, assignment, programming, facilities management and planning, staff development and budgeting.

**Salary Schedules:** Pages 61 to 65 (2007-2010 Contract; will change in new contract printed September, 2011).

If you have questions, **first** check with your Union Building Representative or give UESF a call at (415) 956-8373.

**Pension:** SFUSD paraprofessionals will be transferred out of the Public Agency Retirement System (PARS) and into Social Security starting on October 12, 2011. All paras 55 and over will need to make a decision on whether to enter Social Security or an alternate 403(b) plan in late August. Previous earnings for all paraprofessionals will be transferred out of PARS and into yet another 403(b) plan in the coming months. More information will be provided via US mail, email, and on the UESF website at [www.uesf.org](http://www.uesf.org). Call Carolyn Samoa at 956-8373 if you have any questions.

**NEW LOCATION!**  
**Monthly Paraprofessional Meetings**  
  
The fourth Wednesday of each month  
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Ida B. Wells High School  
(1099 Hayes St. @ Alamo Square Park)