



GEA / Gateway Issue Resolution Guide

Bill Brown
GEA 2nd VP
Grievance Chair



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Definition of a Grievance:

The filing of a grievance is appropriate (in most cases) IF behavior by the administration violates the language of the current contract and the matter is not able to be resolved through an initial conversation between the aggrieved party (with their building rep) and the immediate administrator responsible.

If you are unsure about whether a situation rises to the level of a grievance, PLEASE ask. There are some sections of vague and general language in the contract that may be able to be applied. The goal, in most cases, is to resolve the issue prior to filing.

Weingarten Meeting:

If there is a possibility of discipline or if a meeting is “investigatory”, a member has the right to request that there be a union representative with you in the meeting. If a meeting starts off with no indication it will be investigatory, and, during the meeting, he determines that it is investigatory (or might involve discipline), a member has the right to stop the meeting and request representation.

Issues:

- If you are having an issue, regardless if that issue constitutes a “grievance”, you can (and should) ALWAYS bring that issue to the attention of your **building rep** (see below for a list).
- Issues can be raised with your building rep, ESP Rep, or any member of the Executive Committee. Please approach your building rep first, though, if it's convenient. They can steer you to the most appropriate action / person for your particular problem. We work as a team, but we each have specific roles and responsibilities to streamline the process.
- Be aware and prepared that, if your issue doesn't constitute a grievance (i.e. a violation of the specific language of the contract), we will be more limited in what we can hope to achieve. Though we will advocate just as strongly for your position, we will not be backed up by the contract and, as a result, will need to rely on diplomacy, and appeals to common sense, combined with the weight of solidarity among our union-member staff - which can have a powerful effect, if we stick together.

Grievance and Issue Process:

If you have an issue (whether or not it is a contract violation or not) you should take the following steps:

1. Bring your issue to the attention of **your Building Rep.** and discuss. This year, the Building Reps are as follows:
 - a. HS -Beth Guertin (band)
 - b. HS - Mark Donovan (art)
 - c. MS - Hannah Sullivan (Math)
 - d. MS - Chris Mosher (history / Social Studies)
 - e. LV - Jennifer Bak (Grade 3- Littleville)
 - f. LV - Linda Hyjek (Grade 2 - Littleville)
 - g. LV/CH - Danae Dostal (Littleville and Chester Elementary PE)
 - h. ESP's MS/HS/LV/CH/Cafe - Cecilia Moreau (District-wide Para Prep)
 - i. CAFE - Wendy Koivisto (Littleville)

*** You can find links to email your reps on the GEA Website under "Contact Leadership). The website is located at: www.gatewayeducators.org

** Whoever you refer your issue to will share that issue with the Executive Committee Team so we are all aware of it, able to discuss it, and (hopefully) on the same page.

2. If there is a desire to pursue the issue, you and your rep should schedule a meeting with your immediate supervisor/administrator to discuss the issue and, hopefully, reach a resolution. This meeting should be scheduled **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. If the issue is going to become a grievance, there is a time limit for me to file this of 15 working days. Please keep this in mind.
3. If there is no satisfactory resolution of the issue at the member/Building Rep/Admin meeting, then this should be **immediately** made known to the GEA Grievance Chair (the 2nd VP), currently **Bill Brown**, the *District Librarian (office, Central Library, MS/HS Complex)* , so that a determination can be made as to whether the issue constitutes a grievance with appropriate time to meet the grievance filing deadline.
4. The Grievance Chair will meet with you, investigate and check in with our MTA Rep (Brad Brousseau), then let you know if the issue fits the definition of a grievance. If it does, he/she will file a grievance (step 1) with the appropriate administrator. The subsequent steps of the grievance are laid out clearly in the contract.
5. If the issue is not considered to be a grievance, the Grievance Chair will meet with you to determine what the best course of action is for continuing to address the problem.

Unfair Labor Practice:

Some issues, while not contract violations (potential grievances), are still illegal. An **unfair labor practice** is a violation of Massachusetts statute: (Title XXI, 150a)

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXXI/Chapter150A/Section4>)

- It is usually about:
 - Failure to notify
 - Failure to bargain
 - Disparagement

Discrimination:

There are a few related laws relating to discrimination in the workplace. You'll find some of these here:

- **Discrimination in the Workplace: - related laws:**
<https://malegislature.gov/Search?SearchTerms+=discrimination>)

If you're ever unsure or have any questions, please contact me (Bill Brown) at:

- brownlibrary1963@gmail.com
- 413-320-1004
- Or in person in the GRSD HS/MS Library

MOST IMPORTANTLY: *“Read and know the contract!” It's been hard-earned and protects you!*

Thanks!

