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TEACHER GUIDE

Part-Time Teaching — Frequently Asked Questions



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

Part-Time Teaching— Frequently Asked Questions

Many teachers in Alberta work part-time (less than 1.0 FTE). Some are on part-time contracts, under section 211 of the *Education Act*; others are on full-time continuing contracts, under section 207. For all teachers, the contract of employment between a teacher and the employing board includes all the provisions of the collective agreement and any written agreement between the teacher and the board. If a teacher makes any other arrangements with a board, those arrangements must be consistent with the provisions of the collective agreement and are binding on both parties.

Part-time teachers often have concerns and questions about working conditions. The following are among the most frequent:

- 1. Although I am working part-time, I am asked to attend all staff meetings, professional development (PD) days and both days of convention. What should I be doing?**
 - Staff meetings: To the extent that it is reasonable, you should attend staff meetings outside of class hours, as would any other teacher; however, you have no obligation to return to the school several hours after you finish your assigned time, or to go in on days when you do not work.
 - PD and convention days: You are expected to attend on days on which you would normally be required to work. Your FTE may include scheduled PD days. Your obligation is limited by your contract status.
 - You are not under a full-time contract; therefore, the time during which you are not contracted to teach is your own. Thus, if you work mornings with one board, you are free to work with another board in the afternoon or to simply use the time as you wish.
- 2. I am working .4 FTE but scheduled to work one period or more each morning and each afternoon. I cannot even substitute elsewhere. What can I do about this schedule?**
 - Raise the issue with your principal first. If you can't resolve it, contact the Association for assistance.
 - If your part-time workload is an ongoing issue, bring it to the attention of your local Teacher Welfare Committee.
 - You are not required to cover other teachers or work the lunchroom or do extra assignments.
- 3. Although I work .5 FTE, I do not have any unassigned time to prepare for my classes, do marking or even grab a cup of coffee. All the other teachers get three periods of unassigned time a week.**
 - .5 FTE hours should be calculated based on the typical teachers' instructional and assignable time at your school. For example, if at your school, teachers generally have 1200 hours of assignable time, then you should have 600 hours of assignable time.
- 4. I teach part-time and do some extracurricular activities. I have been asked to take on even more activities on my own time. What are my obligations?**
 - If you do not want to take on additional extracurricular work, just say no. It is your legal right.
- 5. I have been on a part-time contract for five years and am not even considered for full-time work when it comes up in the district. What can I do?**
 - In too many circumstances, part-time work becomes a trap. During the year, part-time teachers are told that it is too disruptive to move them to open, full-time positions. Refer the issue to the local bargaining process.
- 6. The school board is considering cutting staff. It has been suggested that if several of us would reduce our time just a little we would be able to keep everybody. What advice do you have?**
 - This is a pay cut that could affect you for the rest of your life by having a negative impact on your pension and it has very serious implications if you should fall ill.
 - Don't make a significant change in your status without first consulting the Association.
- 7. I am thinking of changing to part-time status to ease into retirement. Is this a good idea?**
 - If the pressure of full-time teaching is the problem, ask your local to address working conditions.
 - Changing to part-time status could harm you financially. Part-time arrangements can affect your pension and benefits and your FTE from year to year. Consult your Association before making any decisions of this nature.
- 8. I have been told that, even though I have a part-time, continuing contract, my time can be cut from the current .6 FTE to .1 FTE. Is this possible?**
 - Your time can be cut—within reason. However, a cut of this magnitude could constitute constructive dismissal and the Association would support you in an appeal. If this happens, contact the Association immediately.