

# LEAdvocate

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*A Basic Right...  
A Great  
Public School  
for Every  
Child.*

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## “Urban Myths” from LEA Members

The *LEAdvocate* has been running a series of “urban myths”—myths both popularly believed around the country as well as some myths about the *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement* and District goings-on about which we have felt members needed to know (The series will continue in future issues of the *LEAdvocate*).

Recently, members provided a host of ideas, comments, and suggestions on this month’s **LEA Negotiations survey**. **The LEA Negotiations Team will be sorting through all of the survey results and information provided by members to ensure the best possible collective bargaining effort for all of our members as the team gears up for contract negotiations.**

However, while reading over the member comments on the survey, we also discovered there is some misinformation and a few “urban myths” among the LEA membership, too. Without wanting to or intending to embarrass anyone, here are six “myths” or concerns that showed up among the comments we received with responses we hope will be of value to the membership.



*“I don't know how it can be addressed but there is a problem with Annual Leave Plan B. If someone uses up their 10 day leave for the current year--even if it is for medical reasons--they cannot use any days from their accumulated leave unless it is sick leave. If they needed to take a day off for a funeral of a friend or graduation or whatever they would be docked in pay. If all the days are used up--couldn't the days used for medical be taken out of the accumulated sick leave which would open up some days for whatever reason until the end of that school year?”*

Attending a funeral for a friend or a graduation falls under appropriate use of “Emergency Leave” and Accumulated Leave **can** be used for **either sick leave or emergency leave** purposes. File for “Emergency Leave” ahead of time (it needs to be approved by Human Resources) if you are on Option A **or** Option B Leave (just make sure you specify you are requesting “Emergency Leave.”) See pages 17-18

of the *Professional Agreement*, items “a” through “I” for typically approved requests for emergency leave **regardless** of which Leave Plan (A or B) in which you are enrolled. **Access the contract on the LEA web at: [http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08\\_Teacher\\_Neg\\_Agreement-chgs\\_accpted.pdf](http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08_Teacher_Neg_Agreement-chgs_accpted.pdf)**



*“I don't know what can be done about the air quality in my building, but it is always really cold in my classroom. I constantly have a blower blowing cold air. Even when maintenance came out, they recognized the problem, but never came back to fix it. That was 2 or 3 years ago. It's a little frustrating. I know its cold in other schools too, but it really affects how my students are able to concentrate and focus in class.”*

**Sometimes you just have to be a little assertive.** Each building should have an IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) representative who serves as a liaison between the staff and the principal and the principal and the District. A lot of time and effort by both LEA and LPS went into the creation of these paid positions to help members resolve IAQ issues in their buildings. If conditions merit and equipment is not repaired or replaced, **make sure your principal has turned in work orders** to LPSDO. If the work orders have been turned in **and** nothing is changed, contact LEA with the dates the work orders were turned in and other information about the situation you have, and LEA will work with the District on your concern. **The above holds true regarding sites undergoing construction** (another frequently commented upon situation in the survey). Some inconvenience is going to result no matter what with construction **and also** when temperatures outside make sudden, dramatic changes, but if you are faced with an **on-going, unresolved** problem and you are not able to get answers or reach solutions working with your IAQ liaison and principal at your site, contact LEA with documentation and details about the work orders that have been submitted as well as the results (or lack thereof) and let us see what we can do for you.



*“I feel that LPS should establish a bank of donated leave for people to use when needed for health reasons. If all who wanted to participate would contribute just one day of their personal leave, then anyone who contributed could borrow from the bank when necessary due to poor health of themselves or a family member.”*

LEA and LPS successfully implemented a process wherein people facing catastrophic health situations and the need for donated leave can apply and receive help a number of years ago and **it continues to be in effect**. This contract provision has been a lifesaver for numerous members over the year. **See Article 8-14, “Voluntary Leave Transfer for Catastrophic Illness” on page 24 of the *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement* for details (available on the LEA web at: [http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08\\_Teacher\\_Neg\\_Agreement-chgs\\_accpted.pdf](http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08_Teacher_Neg_Agreement-chgs_accpted.pdf))**



*“Plan days are often taken up with meetings...”*

Of all of the pieces of the *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement* that addresses plan time, the language regarding elementary plan days is by far the most specific and the strongest. **Article 5-16A.3, “Professional Time for Educators”** states the four elementary plan days “shall be allocated one per quarter for each certificated employee *as individual planning time*” [editorial emphasis]. **No** mandatory meetings by the District, an administrator, or supervisor can be called on an elementary plan day. **Period.** If colleagues or team members wish to meet on a plan day, they do so at their own discretion and have the power and authority to “just say no” if they wish to make “individual planning” their priority for the day.



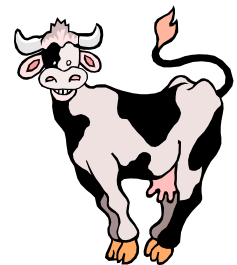
*“Teachers spend too much time in meetings, when we could be working, grading or planning.”*

The *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement* in **Article 5-18** addresses “**Guidelines for General Staff Meetings**” and contains both the essential elements that need to be in place and an appeal process for staff who are faced with too many meetings. If general staff meetings are an issue at your building, LEA strongly recommends members consult this portion of the contract *and utilize* it to alleviate their situation. *Also*, if meetings other than general staff meetings are the problem, members need to start applying the principles and intent of the stated contract language to try to rectify other meeting situations regarding irrelevant or redundant content or not respecting teachers’ time! See page 12 of the contract for details (**available on the LEA web at: [http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08\\_Teacher\\_Neg\\_Agreement-chgs\\_accpted.pdf](http://lincolneducationassociation.org/files/06-08_Teacher_Neg_Agreement-chgs_accpted.pdf)**) and call LEA for assistance.



*“I am being told by fellow teachers that have the 'inside' information, that the district is going to cut planning time by half. I am most concerned about this...”*

**Beware the rumor mill, especially once negotiations begin.** Someone always seems to know someone who said that someone told someone else that they heard... Well, you get the idea. If you hear rumors about negotiations, contact the President or Executive Director or LEA members who serve on the negotiation team. They may not be able to totally answer your questions because negotiated items are never final until negotiations as a whole are finalized, but rumors can be detrimental to the entire negotiations process, staff morale, and serve no useful purpose—so seek out the truth by contacting your Association. *To specifically address this rumor:* Although LEA and LPS may not always agree about how plan time can and should be used, historically, both groups have respected the fact that the plan time Lincoln teachers currently have is essential to teachers and it is a critical part of what makes Lincoln a quality school district. Plan time is a negotiated item that either “side” can bring up during negotiations, but for LEA and its membership, teacher plan time has also historically been as close to a sacred cow as one can come, and the LEA membership would have to specifically indicate a willingness to give up, reduce, or trade-away plan time before the LEA Team would consider any reduction in current plan time.



*LEA and the LEA Negotiations Team  
appreciates the time, effort, and thought  
that each and every member put into their responses on the 2007 All-Member  
Negotiations Survey.  
Your input is incalculable!  
Thank you!*



**Have you checked your seniority number and assignment listing for this school year?** For the importance of doing so, see the last issue of the *LEAdvocate* at: [http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/files/ADV\\_6\\_112007.pdf](http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/files/ADV_6_112007.pdf)

**By contractual agreement, after January 3, 2008, even if there is an obvious error in either your seniority or assignment list, it will not be corrected until next year, so it is important that any errors be addressed before the deadline. Contact LPS or LEA if you see an obvious error in the listings or if you have questions. Access the seniority and assignment lists at the LPS web site by going to: <https://gold.lps.org/gold/certificatedlist/>**

# LEA Welcomes and Rolls Out the Red Carpet for the Following New Members:

Sarah Anderson.....Cavett Elementary School  
Linda Beck Johnson .....Hill Elementary School  
Roger Burris .....Bryan Community  
Tora Kinder.....SECC - Lincoln  
Janet Potter .....Brownell Elementary School  
Alison Preston .....Lakeview Elementary School  
Colleen Schreiner .....Hill Elementary School  
Paul Smith .....Lincoln Southeast High School  
Staci Stava .....McPhee Elementary School  
Michelle Stephens .....Prescott Elementary School  
Summer Stutzman.....Arnold Elementary School



*Thank you for joining and for adding your voice to your professional association  
and to society's # 1 profession.*