

# A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

Every educator wants parents who are involved in their child's education. Time has proven to us over and over again that it's essential. But some parents can go a bit...overboard.

**As an educator have you ever experienced a parent who:**

- Questions your subject matter knowledge?
- Questions your grading rubric?
- Complains about you to your administrator without first addressing the issue with you?
- Refuses to believe anything they may perceive as negative about their child?

These parents—sometimes called helicopter parents—can be a drain on educators' limited time and resources. Unfortunately, there is little by way of training or support on how to deal with this style of parenting.

## 5 Tips to Help You Manage Overly Demanding Parents

1. **Communicate clearly.** Let the parent know when and how you will communicate about their child's progress.
2. **Set boundaries.** Set parameters for when you'll respond so that you can manage the parent's expectations. Don't make the mistake of providing your cell phone number to parents. Parents have multiple ways to communicate with you, including your school phone and email.
3. **Focus on developing the child's independence.** The child must be responsible for their own work. If the parent comes to you with questions about a homework assignment, politely ask the parent to have the student come and see you after school or between classes.
4. **Keep your principal in the loop.** Throughout the process stay in touch with your principal. Keep copies of your communication to document your efforts.
5. **Use the buddy system.** Ask a colleague to sit in on conferences with the parent. It helps to reduce miscommunication.

Parents are entitled to their own opinions. As long as the parent isn't spreading false and detrimental rumors in the community—that the educator is guilty of abuse or neglect, for example—there's nothing illegal about a parent's opinion about an educator.

If the situation becomes unmanageable and the administration is not providing support, please contact your local UniServ director for further advice and guidance specific to your situation.



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