



“WORK TO RULE”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does “work-to-rule” mean?

Working “to the rule” means performing our regularly assigned duties as required under the TABCO Master Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), during the normal duty day. It is meant to highlight the unpaid work educators do before and after school, on weekends, and during our lunch and planning periods.

Why do this now?

TABCO members have dealt with too many crises created or mishandled by Central office.

- WiFi outages mean we can’t teach the 70% of students that are not in school buildings. This is unacceptable,
- There were four new educational models (original distance learning, enhanced distance learning Spring 2020, enhanced distance learning Fall 2020, hybrid learning inter 2021 and now four-day in-person for elementary),
- Three separate tech crises (the ransomware attack spawned the reimaging process, the entire payroll crisis- W2, leave time, pension 403(b), overpay and more, in addition to a data breach compromising at least 2500 people’s personal information).

We have to work to rule starting April 22nd because it’s our last resort to force the system to address these crises for our students and for ourselves.

What activities are impacted during work-to-rule?

See the list below.

What if my principal asks me to do something on that list?

If you haven’t already committed to a voluntary activity, politely and professionally let them know that your contract gives you the option to decline the request. A statement like this works well: “My contract gives me the right to decline that request, and because the Union is engaged in a work-to-rule for a safer workplace, I’m declining that request to support my colleagues and my students.”

Is this a strike?

No, strikes in Maryland are prohibited. Because working to the rule means performing our regular duties, we are not withdrawing our contractually required labor.

What if we all call in sick at once?

That is not an option. Legally speaking, a “sick out” is considered a withdrawal of labor like a strike and it is therefore also prohibited in Maryland. **The penalty for breaking this law is the loss of our right to bargain for a period of time. We’d lose Master Agreement and MOU, and the right to bargain anything at all.**

I’m an untenured teacher. Can I get in trouble for doing this?


No. Working to the rule means performing your contractual duties.

What should I do with my work at the end of the day?

Keep a running list of the tasks you are not able to perform under the time constraints of the regular duty day. At the end of the day, send your administrator the list and ask him/her what you would like them to prioritize for the following day. Put up an auto response on your email after the end of your duty day, and let parents know that you will respond to them during the regular duty day.

What else can I do to support our union’s efforts?

Many of our members have come up with some great ways to show our solidarity:

- Wear a TABCO mask during class and during meetings with parents so they can know what it will be like in the hybrid learning model. Spread the word with your colleagues.
- Change your Facebook  photo to the “I am TABCO photo frame” (we need one of those) so that our families and community sees all of us as both teachers *and* union members.

How can parents and families support our efforts?

- Email the Board of Education (boe@mybcps.info) and tell them to listen to educators about the problems we face in the concurrent teaching model
- Encourage them to join our community support list: <http://e-activist.com/page/79057/data/1>

What We Don’t Do During “Work To Rule”:

- Educators will work only within the hours of the contractual duty day. At the beginning of the duty day, staff will enter the building together, and staff will leave together at the end of the day.
- Educators will not participate in optional meetings before and after the contractual duty day.
- Educators will not respond to work-related emails outside of the contractual duty day.

- Educators should not continue participation in voluntary clubs and extracurricular activities for which they do not receive EDA payments.
- Educators shall not accept any other voluntary assignment outside the core job function of each educator.

DO'S AND DON'TS

✓ DO's	✗ DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Meet in the school parking lot together (maintaining social distance) at the prescribed start of the teacher day on Mondays. Walk in the building together, as one.✓ Meet at the lobby at the prescribed end of the duty day on Fridays. Walk out together.✓ Only take work home that is necessary for you to plan adequately for delivery of instruction.✓ Have your Educator Council chair or Building Rep explain what is happening to the PTA✓ Contact your UniServ Director regarding voluntary after-school activities for which you have made a commitment to determine your obligations to continue.✓ Support each other as best you can with ideas or materials that will require no unpaid time.✓ Continue to meet all contractual and instructional obligations during your duty day.✓ Encourage colleagues to join you. If they chose not to be involved, stay professional.✓ Refer parents with questions to the TABCO website where we have specific resources for parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Participate in illegal activities such as sick outs, work slow-downs, vandalism, etc. Working to rule means you perform your normal duties during your contractually-defined workday.✗ In any way break your paid extra-curricular contracts. In working to the rule, you need to honor all contracts you have with the Board of Education.✗ Use instructional time to discuss work to rule activities.✗ Block access to your school if informational picketing is occurring.✗ Carry signs on sticks if informational picketing is happening.✗ Participate in actions that would cost us the public support we've worked hard to build up. We should not alienate parents when we're fighting for safe schools.✗ Directly contact parents about Work To Rule demands, questions or concerns- TABCO is in contact with the PTA.✗ Disparage individual School Board members, BCPS leaders, including the Superintendent or other BCPS employees.