

Legal Assistance: Professional Problems

MSEA provides assistance to school employees faced with difficulties in their professional lives. It is important that members contact the UniServ staff member as soon as the problem arises and before initiating any legal action. An early response by staff and/or counsel may result in a resolution of the difficulty and avoid a protracted controversy.

If you need help, follow these guidelines:

- Contact the UniServ Director assigned to that particular area. UniServ directors shall act as the initial contact for those school employees needing legal help.
- If the problem is one where a violation of the collective bargaining agreement is alleged, it will be handled by the UniServ Director in cooperation with the Local Association.
- If the problem involves a claim covered under the Educators Employment Liability Policy, the UniServ Director will forward the appropriate papers to the MSEA Counsel.
- All other requests for legal assistance should be initiated with the UniServ Director who will forward same to the MSEA Counsel.
- MSEA's Center for Legal Affairs is authorized to provide legal assistance to members in all cases except the following:
 - a. any case where an individual school employee is requesting legal assistance to appeal a decision of the State Board of Education or a decision of a Maryland Circuit Court;
 - b. any case where an individual is requesting legal assistance for an action at any level in the federal court system; and
 - c. any case involving legal services to a non-member or to a member where the event giving rise to the request occurred before the individual joined.
- In any case where the Chief Counsel is not authorized to act or in any case where a school employee or affiliate is seeking assistance and the decision of the Chief Counsel is against MSEA participation, the Legal Review Panel, upon appropriate request, will consider the request and make a decision as to MSEA assistance.

A copy of the MSEA legal services program operational guidelines is available upon request.

**Refer to the MSTTA Handbook, UniServ Director Cheryl McLeod at 410-848-0983, ext. 15 or MSTTA OnLine, www.mseane.org, for more information.*