

Tips from Tim - FALL 2009:

Now that summer break is over and we are getting back into the swing of things with our students and our classes, I want to take a moment to remind you about how best to protect yourself from possible litigation in the school place.

As we all know, we can't predict the future as to the possibility of a lawsuit or some other legal situation coming your way based on things that occur at school. But, there are many things we can do to prepare ourselves to better handle such a situation if it does arise.



As professionals, we all take a great deal of pride in our work. I am confident that all of you are maintaining very good records as the year progresses. Believe me, if you ever find yourself in a legal "battle", your records, especially if well kept and well organized, will go a long way in assisting you through the situation. Additionally, if you feel there is a possibility that things may be going "sour" with a student, their parents, an administrator (or a teacher you are over as an administrator), or another teacher, then **DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!** Use a time-line format and put anything and everything in there. Later on, if you recall something else that is pertinent, go back and plug it into the time-line. This is to be a "living" document...kind of like a diary. Keep it current as you go along and don't wait too long to add items as they occur. A document such as this can get your legal counsel up to speed in a short amount of time, especially when time may be of the essence.

As we always say, and it is even posted on the web site, if you are facing a potential legal situation, don't e-mail! Please **CALL** the PET office immediately. This allows us to find an answer to your question in a timely manner or to provide you with legal representation early on so that no legal missteps are made. Don't think you have to face these kinds of situations alone. Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET) is here for you when you need us. Whatever you need to know, just give us a call. We may not have "Charlie" on staff, but sometimes we think Larry Crain may be his cousin and he is just as knowledgeable. Konichi Wa.

Sincerely,

Tim Brinegar
PET Legal & Legislative Liaison