

Introduction & Contact

My name is Al Sylvia, and I teach math at the high school. I have been employed by AUSD since 1990. I was appointed Grievance Chair in February, 2013, and am also a member of the ATA Executive Board. Together with the Grievance Committee (which consists of 1 or 2 teachers from each site), our responsibility is to uphold the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between AUSD and all teachers. If an issue arises between a teacher and an administrator or the district, the teacher is encouraged to contact me to determine if a grievance exists. There are several ways you can contact me. Email me at asylvia@ausd.net or telephone me at the high school, extension 1211, or telephone me at home (626) 447-0496. When emailing me at the above address, it is advisable **not** to provide any information since it is possible for the district to monitor our email correspondence. Rather, just provide me with your cell phone number or your home telephone number and a convenient time for me to reach you.

What is a Grievance?

A grievance occurs when the AUSD has violated a provision of the CBA which has adversely affected a teacher. The violation can be as simple as a misinterpretation of contract language, so even small issues can be subject to the grievance process. Many issues are not subject to a grievance because they do not constitute a violation of the CBA, but you are still encouraged to contact me or the grievance committee representative at your site because other remedies may be available to you under the education code or the law. Most issues, whether or not subject to the grievance process, can be settled informally. Your first step would be to schedule a meeting with your immediate administrative supervisor. In any such meeting, you are encouraged to have an ATA rep with you to protect your rights and to insure that all parties understand any agreements or expectations arising from the meeting. You can take me, your site rep, or a colleague whom you trust to the meeting. It is important that you make any claim expeditiously because the contract provides that the grievance must be submitted within 15 working days of your becoming aware of the contractual violation. It may be necessary to submit the grievance before you meet with your supervisor, but if the issue is resolved, you can withdraw the grievance.

Timeline for Filing a Grievance

Step 1: Submit a Level 1 Grievance to your immediate supervisor within 15 days. The grievance typically is just one page briefly describing the alleged violation, citing the specific provision(s) of the CBA violated, and requesting a specific remedy.

Step 2: If the issue is unresolved after the informal meeting, AUSD will submit its response to the grievance following a specific timeline in the CBA. The response usually denies that any violation of the CBA has occurred.

Step 3: Submit a Level 2 appeal of AUSD's response and, if necessary, request the issue be arbitrated by an outside arbitrator. During this process, either the ATA Executive Board or the Grievance Committee, or both, will discuss the issue (and perhaps contact CTA for guidance) to advise the teacher on the merits of the grievance.

This is a simplified timeline for what can become an elaborate process. My hope (and the hope of all members of the ATA Executive Board) is that all ATA members feel adequately represented at times when CBA language has been violated or when members have been treated unfairly by the district.