

# WHAT IS A UNION

An organization formed of workers who join and use their strength to have a voice in the workplace. Through the union, workers have the ability to negotiate from a position of strength with employers over wages, benefits, workplace health and safety, job training and other work-related issues. Unions also serve an important role making sure that management acts fairly and treats its workers with respect.

## **Why do I need a union?**

We work in public service because you care about your community. We can do more for our students, families, and each other if we speak with one voice. When we organize as a union, we gain the strength to make real change. Together, we speak with one voice that no one can ignore — not our bosses, not the people we serve, and not our elected officials at any level.

## **What is collective bargaining and how does it work?**

Collective bargaining is the process of negotiation between employees and their employer over wages, working conditions, benefits, and other aspects of workers' compensation and rights.

A committee of our co-workers — chosen by us — sits down and hammers out an agreement known as a "union contract" on every issue of concern to our bargaining unit. The committee sits at the bargaining table as equals with management.

**Strength in numbers:** By uniting workers, unions can leverage collective power to achieve better outcomes than individual employees could negotiate on their own.

## **Knowing your Weingarten Rights!**

The right of employees to have union representation present during investigatory interviews. Meaning Employees can request representation when they believe they might face disciplinary action.

## **Conditions to exercise you Weingarten Rights**

An employee is entitled to union representation when all of the following conditions are met: The employee must be questioned in connection with an investigation. The employee must reasonably believe he or she may be disciplined as a result of answers.

## **The employee must request representation.**

\*\*A meeting does not have to occur in connection with a formal investigation.

An “investigation occurs even when a supervisor sees information to determine whether discipline actions should be taken.

**Example:** An employee is suspected of being late for work, and a supervisor calls him/her to determine if this is so, or why? This would be considered a Weingarten meeting. You have a right to union representation.

## **What can the union do?**

### **Provide advice and assistance to the employee.**

- The role of the union representative is to consult with, to advise and to otherwise assist the employee during the process but the employee should be the one to answer questions. The union representative is there to help the employee remember or bring out relevant information and to ask questions.
- The Union representative is entitled to ask questions that are reasonably related to the matter being discussed, and may raise relevant points that help the employee tell his or her side of the story
- As with Formal Discussions, the union representative does not have the right to disrupt the meeting or prevent management from carrying out the investigation. He or she may not answer for the employee, but they may confer privately before the employee answers the questions.
- Union representatives are not present to tell the employee not to cooperate or not to provide a statement. Employees are required to participate in official administrative investigations.

## **Who’s responsible for notifying the union?**

It’s the employee’s responsibility to know and request their rights. Management isn’t required to notify the union.

## **What happens when union representation is requested?**

When an employee requests a representative, management (supervisor, Principal, or other administration) must contact an Employee Labor Relations representative. The meeting should be canceled and rescheduled, until a union representative is available. Or ask the employee if they would like to continue without union representation.

Don’t forget the employee must request representation.

## **Disadvantage of non-dues paying members**

- **Cost:** Representing non-union members can be costly for unions.
- **Lack of control:** Non-union members may not participate in union activities or negotiations.
- **Legal challenges:** Unions may face legal challenges if they are required to represent non-union employees.
- **Funds and dues:** Unions may struggle to maintain their financial viability when representing non-union members

**\*\*In short, no dues, no funds , no funds, no union!**

## **It is very important to know your job and your rights**

If you have any questions, please send your questions along with your personal email address to [spap1@verizon.net](mailto:spap1@verizon.net)

**Our website is in the works, it is <https://www.schoolpoliceofphila.org>**

**Our union meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at 9:30am, Location The Philadelphia Fire Officers' Union Hall on Lefevre St.**

### **Address:**

2500 Lefevre St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19137

## **[SPAP Executive Team](#)**

**President-Bernadette Ambrose-Smith**

**Vice President-Kamirah Randolph**

**Secretary-Teresa Wright-Taylor**

**Financial Secretary-Rochelle Harrison**

**Trustee-Tiffaney Hayes**

**Acting Treasure-Dorene Henderson**

**Acting Trustee- Derrick L Holmes**

**Acting Trustee- Sharif Muhammed El**