

# Noncertificated Staff Attending Staff Meetings

**Q** Our school principal invited the librarian and teacher assistants to attend all our staff meetings. Some teachers feel that the discussion topics are confidential and pertain to teachers only. Has the principal the right to make such a decision?



**Q & A**

GORDON THOMAS

**A** It is the principal's responsibility to see that the school operates efficiently and effectively. If the principal believes it necessary or desirable that noncertificated personnel attend staff meetings, then he or she is entitled to invite them. All staff should be treated with courtesy and respect and be made to feel that, as part of the team, they have an important role to play in achieving the mission of the school. However, because teachers are ultimately accountable for a school's educational program, nonteachers should not normally participate in decisions about the educational program and budget. Involvement of all staff, especially where support staff form the majority of the staff, could result in decisions that run contrary to the preference of those responsible for such decisions.

Staff meetings could be divided into two components, one that provides information for all staff and a second component where only certificated staff meet. If the teaching staff objects to the presence of noncertificated personnel during the discussion of professional matters, then these objections should be made known to the principal in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct.

*Questions for consideration in this column are welcome. Please address them to Dr Gordon Thomas at Barnett House (gordon.thomas@ata.ab.ca).*