



Q & A

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**Q:** What are the obligations of part-time teachers? What are their responsibilities regarding attendance at things like staff meetings, district inservice days and teachers' convention on days that they don't normally teach?

**A:** The answer to your question begins in section 103 of the *School Act*, which speaks specifically to part time teachers being paid "only for the time the teacher teaches" section 103(b).

The teaching assignment is their shift. Their shift is a defined time and any addition to, or adjustment of, the shift must be done with their mutual agreement and proper compensation.

In simplest terms, whatever is consistent with the teacher's assignment for that day is his/her obligation. If the teacher does not have a teaching assignment for that day then he/she is not obligated to attend.

It is understood that staff meetings and other organizational and inservice days are an important part of the operation of the school. However, part-time teachers may engage in other employment when not working for the school board. It is unfair to expect a part-time teacher to forgo employment income from a second job to attend school events for which they are not paid. Even if a part-time teacher does not have another job, he or she often works part time for family reasons, and attendance at events outside the scheduled work week may require extensive organization and some cost beyond what was developed/budgeted for the teacher's normal schedule. The Association has recently received an arbitration decision which clearly states that part-time teachers cannot be assigned duties on days or times they normally do not work. The arbitrator also recommended that part-time teachers discuss all their assigned duties with their principal at the start of the school year and receive the schedule in writing. The teacher's FTE status should be based on this agreed schedule.

For example:

1. If the teacher works mornings, and your staff meeting is late afternoon, the teacher is not obligated to come back for the meeting without additional salary. However, it is the teacher's duty to be informed about what is covered in the meeting and that decisions made at the meeting in his/her absence are binding.
2. If the teacher normally works a half day on Fridays and the district is having an inservice day that day, the teacher attends consistent with his or her or regularly scheduled shift on that day.
3. The same applies to Teachers' Convention. However, some collective agreements provide additional compensation to part-time teachers for full attendance at convention.

If a teacher is asked to report to work beyond their scheduled work days, a simple solution would be to increase the part-time teacher's full time equivalency to compensate for attendance at all organizational activities. Or your employer can offer to pay the teacher for the full day if the employer deems it important for him/her to attend. This may be done in half-day (1/400) or full-day (1/200) increments. It is best to have this discussion with the teacher at the beginning of the year so that the teacher has sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements to attend scheduled events.

The teacher's professional obligations are not to be confused with district mandates. District inservices provide teachers with education about district initiatives and priorities. The teacher's obligation to professional growth and development is rooted in his or her professional growth plan (according to Provincial Policy 2.1.5: Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation). It is based on the teacher's own self-assessment that drives his/her professional decisions regarding priorities for that school year and reviewed with the principal. However, none of this means that the teacher couldn't attend these events voluntarily. Teachers are always encouraged to participate in staff meetings and professional development if it fits with their schedule. In many cases, teachers and principals work together to identify key meetings and functions with a provision for time in lieu.

Every contract of employment and collective agreement has unique features. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to call Member Services or Teacher Welfare if they have further questions.