



Q & A

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Executive Secretary

Q: Can the teachers on my staff participate in planning graduation exercises and parties?

A: Teachers, even those who are parents of students graduating, should restrict their involvement in graduation ceremonies to the school-based activities. This would include the presentation ceremonies (whether they take place in the school or not) and a school-sponsored dance or other celebration activity that is school sanctioned and therefore would be under school rules and board policies, and protected by school jurisdiction insurance policies.

Teachers should not become involved in planning for “Safe Grad” parties, bush parties with organized safe drivers, home parties or any other activity that may expose them to legal, financial and professional liability in the event that something goes wrong. Involvement of school staff in the planning, **even allowing the planning to take place on school property**, may expose the staff member, the principal and the district to a lawsuit in the event of an incident. It is best to say “no” to involvement at a very early stage. Even if the likelihood of problems appears low and efforts are made to minimize the risk, there are too many variables (ie, party crashers, weather, limited access to health services, etc) and the resulting consequences are too high.

Even if a teacher acts solely as a parent, other parents may still look upon that person as a teacher who will maintain a professional standard throughout. A teacher is expected to maintain a high level of conduct, especially in any situation which may involve the safety of children. One must not, for example, become involved in any activity that could involve the illegal consumption of alcohol.

For all of these reasons, we advise teachers to stay away from planning or participating in graduation-related activities that are not sanctioned by proper authorities.