

## Just Ask Liz

Dear Liz:

I am an Instructional Research Teacher (IRT) and I am wondering what my duty day is. I am often assigned administrative duties and am included in a number of meetings and committees that always occur beyond the traditional teacher duty day, It is the expectation that as a leader, I stay for these. It seems unfair to me, but I don't see where the negotiated agreement specifies my duty day.

Liz's Wisdom:

Our members are wise and usually know the right answers, even if they are hesitant to enforce them! This answer applies to all certificated employees, not just to IRTs. EVERY teacher and every professional is a leader! Nothing in your negotiated agreement allows the school system to extend your duty day for these meetings, so you cannot be required to stay late for them. You are an **IRTEACHER**! Thus, all of the language in the certificated contract applies to you, as a teacher-leader.

I recommend a problem-solving approach to resolve this situation. First, assess your options in light of your personal commitments. Most people are willing to stay late for more than the one allowable late meeting per month, if compensated in some form. If you are unable or unwilling to work late, then simply email your administrator and (1) state that you are committed to meeting your school's needs via your current assignment/role, (2) request that meetings be scheduled at an earlier time so that they conclude before the duty day ends, and (3) advise that you are unable to stay beyond the duty day.

On the other hand, if you are willing to stay with reasonable compensation, then request extra per diem pay, hourly workshop pay, or acquired hours. If your site administration is unwilling to offer any form of compensation despite your kind offer to stay late, then advise them in advance that you will be professionally excusing yourself from these extra meetings at the conclusion of your duty day and will be counting on them to notify you of any essential events or information that arise after your exit. This is 100% within your contractual rights and may not be reflected in your TPAS evaluation or result in discipline. The key here is open and professional communication!

Meanwhile, please send me any suggestions for specific language that better supports IRTs in their roles and I will share it with our EASMC Negotiations Committee. Better yet, show up for our Negotiations Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 3, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. in the EASMC Conference Room. ALL members are welcome and encouraged to attend and provide input.