

# Know Your Rights

## Representation

You have the right to have your chapter chair present at disciplinary meetings.

Your principal stops you in the hallway and asks you to meet with her afterschool. Before you agree to meet, be sure to ask her a key question: “Am I the focus of a possible disciplinary action?” If she says yes, be sure to request that your UTLA Chapter Chair be present. The role of the Chapter Chair is to ask clarifying questions and to witness the proceedings, not to argue your case.

The right to have a representative at predisciplinary meetings is covered in Article X, Section 10.0: “When an administrator has a conference with an employee where it is evident at the time the meeting is convened that the employee is the focus of possible disciplinary action, the employee shall be notified of the purpose of the meeting, before the meeting takes place, and that it is the employee’s right to be accompanied and represented by a UTLA representative (Chapter Chair) or by any other person so long as that person is not a representative of another employee organization.” The contract also says you have a right to representation when discipline is actually issued (Article X, Section 11.0).

There is an important exception to these rights, as contained in Article X, Section 10.0: “However, this right shall not extend to routine conferences or to any conferences conducted under the evaluation procedures of this Article except for a final conference involving an overall ‘Below Standard’ rating.”

In general UTLA advises that employees not make any statements during such conferences other than a general denial of wrong doing. The District often uses an employee’s statements against the employee during later formal disciplinary actions. You will have ample opportunity to respond appropriately in writing to the conference memo. If you request but are denied representation, you must still attend the conference, but be sure to notify your Chapter Chair of the situation.

**For more information:** See Article X, Section 10.0, of the UTLA-LAUSD contract. Our contract is one of the most comprehensive in the United States and it protects a wide variety of your professional rights. For the full text of the collective bargaining agreement and more “Know Your Rights” columns, log on to [www.utla.net](http://www.utla.net).