###### **ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS**

On paper and in person, keep the focus on your message. When people come to you riled up over the spin from management, a good way to respond is “Affirm, Answer, Redirect.”

**Affirm:**

Let them know you’re listening, you understand, and their feelings are valid. Your co-workers may be scared or upset by what they’ve heard. Don’t get mad at them. It’s management’s fault, not theirs.

*I hear you, I don't want the principal to retaliate against me either!*

**Answer:**

Give a truthful, concise answer to the question. Don’t be evasive. If there’s a grain of truth to management’s message, say that up front.

*Yes, its true our principal might be mad when we show and tell him he's treating veteran employees unfairly. That's why we're all going to his office together with a petition signed by everyone in the building, so he wont be able to single anyone out.*

If you don’t know the answer, don’t guess. Tell them you’ll find out and get back to them. Make sure you follow through, to maintain trust.

**Redirect:**

But once you’ve answered the question, don’t get bogged down in too much back-and-forth about it. Instead, be ready with a question that brings the conversation back to your message and points out what management is trying to distract them from.

*You told me earlier that he principal is always picking favorites and punishing some of us without rhyme or reason. If we don't stand up to him, when will it end?*

Remind your co-workers of the issues that inspired them to organize in the first place. Ask whether that’s changed. Steer the conversation back to the plan to win, and the next steps.