

# What Would You Do?

## **The Situation:**

You have a long-time teacher who is beloved by many of the parents and students at your school. The teacher is known for attending weekend events for her students outside of her regular duties like concerts, performances and athletic events. She often comes in early to tutor students and is considered a leader among your faculty. Through the years, you have come to rely on this teacher more and more. She is a certified administrator and although she does not want to leave the classroom, she often fills in for you when needed. Recently, you have been out a lot because you have ailing parents and this teacher more than once covered after school activities and events to help you out. She has mentored new hires, represented your campus on district committees and become one of your good friends, even to the point that you and your spouses sometimes go to the movies and dinner together. You consider yourself professional colleagues and good friends outside of work.

On Monday morning, you receive an anonymous letter claiming the teacher has been spending a lot of time with a student whose parents are going through a divorce. The letter implies that the teacher has befriended the student and showed this student support academically and emotionally during a difficult time. The letter indicates that the student and teacher have been texting during this difficult time and on more than one occasion have been seen at a nearby Starbucks working on homework and participating in deep conversations. Near the end of the letter, the writer implies that the teacher's relationship with the student crosses a line and at best borders on inappropriate. At worst, the anonymous complaint says, the teacher could be showing romantic tendencies toward the student. The writer threatens to send letters to the media and administration if you don't address the situation.

You are shocked and do not believe what you are reading. You have no idea who wrote the letter but fear that it could be a jealous teacher on staff or a parent who gossips regularly in the copy room with other staff.

Discuss at your table the following questions:

1. What possible issues/concerns might this scenario raise?
2. How could this situation become a violation of the law, the Educator Code of Ethics or other school/district policies?
3. In this situation, what are some potential negative consequences for the teacher, for the student and your school community?
4. What responses/actions will result in a positive outcome and/or what proactive measures might be considered?