

Here's another of the rare teachers whose rights were protected - but not completely. This teacher experienced the humiliation of having a custodian escort her out of her classroom, a popular tactic that warns other teachers, who might be thinking about doing the right thing, what is in store for them if they do.

Also, she had to give up her career to protect her students from White Chalk Crime. But at least she won in court unlike the majority of us who were further abused by the legal system. Her story serves as further proof that districts participate in illegal acts and punish employees that dare to report them. Although her award may appear large, without even knowing her I would bet that she would have much preferred her career and to never have been abused than being awarded this money! It may be better than not being heard by the court, which happened to most of us, but not a whole lot given the knowledge that the truths herein will be swept under the proverbial rug and nothing will change. NAPTA

Teacher awarded \$210,000 in whistleblower suit over testing improprieties at Baltimore school

The Baltimore Sun reports that Joyce V. Dunston, a former schoolteacher, who alleged she was forced to retire after blowing the whistle on testing improprieties at an elementary-middle school where she worked was awarded \$293,000 by a Baltimore Circuit Court jury. However, that amount

was reduced to \$210,000 because Maryland law imposes caps on legal judgments. According to Dunston's attorney, Howard J. Needle, the Baltimore city school board is expected to appeal the decision. The suit alleged that during the 2006-2007 school year, teachers at Rognel Heights Elementary/Middle School were told by their instructional support staff to use improper and unethical testing procedures, including giving students test questions in advance. Dunston refused to break the rules and reported the violations to the assistant principal, the area executive officer in the city schools and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), according to Needle. As a result, the suit alleged, city monitors were sent to the school during the Maryland School Assessments and found multiple violations. However, MSDE spokesman William Reinhard said that a letter was sent to the then-principal saying that no cheating or major violations had been found. Reinhard said, "We did have some suggestions for tightening their procedures," including making sure that all of the staff is properly trained in test procedures and that a backup test coordinator is available if the assistant principal is out of the building. Needle said that when the principal at the time found out that Dunston had reported the alleged testing problems, she walked into her classroom and told her in front of students that she was "in big trouble." She had the custodian escort her out of the building and told the teacher she should never return. Dunston subsequently retired.

Source: Baltimore Sun, 10/27/09, By Liz Bowie