

Labor Management Committee

The Willard Education Association & The Willard Board of Education

Purpose:

To investigate, study, and discuss solutions to mutual problems affecting labor-management relationships of a non-contractual nature.

Participation

Each party shall include top representatives as permanent members of the committee. In order for the committee to gain pertinent information, additional staff may be asked to address the committee.

Teacher Representation: Four (4) members

Board Representation: Four (4) members

Chairperson

The chairmanship of the committee shall alternate monthly between the WEA and the Board representatives. The chairmanship shall alternate monthly on an alphabetical basis between the two parties.

Secretary

The secretary of the committee shall alternate monthly between the WEA and the Board representatives. The secretary shall alternate monthly on an alphabetical basis between the two parties and be of the opposite party of the chairman.

Reporting (Minutes)

The parties will designate an individual (or individuals) to record the topics to be discussed. Both parties shall review the minutes before the next meeting and before any distribution will take place. This review will take place between the secretary and the chairman who presided over the meeting. Attempts will be made to share a draft of the minutes with all members prior to distribution.

Date, Time, Meeting Schedule, and Agenda

Meetings shall be held in October, December, February, and April on the second Wednesday of the month beginning at 3:30 p.m. and limited to two (2) hours, with exceptions to the time schedule and additional meetings mutually agreed upon. Agenda topics will be exchanged at least 48 hrs. prior to the next scheduled meeting. The agenda topics shall include a brief description of each topic to be discussed; emergency topics may be added to the agenda by mutual consent. The first topic to be discussed will be determined by the party occupying the chairmanship. The exchange of topics and subsequent distribution will be the responsibility of the chairman and secretary. All topics, along with a description, should be submitted to the chairman no later than 3:30 p.m. on the Monday prior to the next scheduled meeting.

General Guidelines

- ◆ It is recognized that recommendations growing out of these meeting are not contractual in nature.
- ◆ No grievance shall be discussed and no bargaining shall take place.
- ◆ Topics that could lead to grievances may be discussed.
- ◆ Either party may initiate a request of the Federal and Mediation Conciliation Service for assistance.
- ◆ Each topic should be discussed fully and action reached through use of the “Interest Based Problem-Solving Cycle” before proceeding to another topic. Topics requiring further study may be tabled. Major decisions may be implemented only when reached by consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the topic reverts to its proper place in the collective bargaining process.
- ◆ There will be mutual agreement on any news release.

The Interest-based Problem-Solving Cycle:

1. Identify an issue.
2. Discuss and list interests.
3. Generate options.
4. Establish criteria (standards).
5. Apply the criteria to the options.
6. Develop the solution.
7. Reduce the solution to writing.

Technique

- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Consensus decision making
- ◆ Recording (flip chart)
- ◆ Listening
- ◆ Feedback
- ◆ Member facilitating

Definitions

- ◆ Issue – a topic or subject or issue of concern
- ◆ Position – one party’s solution to an issue, often an inflated requirement, rigidly held, setting the stage for conflict and precluding cooperation.
- ◆ Interest – a party’s concern, need, desire, or goal behind an issue.
- ◆ Mutual interest – an interest held in common with the other party
- ◆ Separate Interest – an interest held by only one party, but often one that can be met without infringing on another party’s interests.
- ◆ Options – potential solutions to an issue.
- ◆ Criteria – values held by all parties involved: yardsticks against which to measure the brainstormed options. (Examples of criteria: simplicity, fairness, affordability, acceptability, workability, common-practice).
- ◆ Brainstorming – a tool to help groups generate the widest possible array of ideas as quickly as possible, “breaking set” to go beyond the familiar and obvious to develop new and creative ideas. Key components are withholding evaluation and lack of idea ownership. (Brainstorming is used to develop options and generate criteria.)

- ◆ Consensus Decision-making - a process leading to group agreement that all can accept and support without feeling they have compromised any interests. (Consensus decision making is used when selecting criteria for judging options and selecting the options that meet the criteria.)

Rules for Brainstorming

1. **Define the problem.**
Make sure that every group member has a clear and accurate perception of what the problem or question is.
2. **No criticism is allowed.**
Don't take time to evaluate ideas that follows later.
3. **No killer phrases.**
Avoid saying things like: "That's ridiculous", or "We've already tried that", or "Whoever heard of that?"
4. **Use freewheeling imagination.**
Let your mind work freely. Don't prevent emergence of ideas by boxing them in by conformity.
5. **Build on other's ideas.**
Combine, expand, and hitchhike, piggyback.
6. **Aim for Quantity**
The more ideas that can be brought out, the better. Don't worry about duplication.
7. **Record each idea.**
On a flipchart exactly as it is offered.

Notes from the Federal Mediators Regarding Labor Management

Purpose:

The Labor-Management Committee should use the Interest Based Bargaining Process and establish the ground rules before meeting for the first time. The actual purpose is to discuss problems, establish relationships, and to improve relationships.

Meeting Area:

Agree to a comfortable area that is free from distractions. It is best to have a U-shaped configuration with the tables so communication can be free flowing. Utilize a flip chart and establish a regular time and day of the week to meet.

Make-up of the Group:

The actual groups should be small in order to stimulate the best discussion. It is possible to have rotating or (ad hoc) members to deal with a specific issue. Qualities of those involved should include: responsible, decisive, trust-builder, and respected.

What are some reasons to meet:

- ◆ Resolve problems before they become grievances.
- ◆ Facilitate communications.
- ◆ Promote joint understanding.
- ◆ Improve teaching and service...not a complaint session. Question: How can we make things better? Example: reduce absenteeism and turnover, making sure everyone is pulling in the same direction.
- ◆ Problem-solving: Define and analyze a problem while attempting to find solutions, and then build in some follow-up. Must use a consensus process...no vote should take place.
- ◆ This process is especially good for dealing with morale problems.

What are some pitfalls for the process?

- ◆ It is not negotiations.
 - ◆ Some groups will just go through the motions and will not seriously deal with issues.
 - ◆ Breaking the ground rules will destroy the process.
 - ◆ Delay in informing constituents will de-rail the process.
 - ◆ Talk will not solve the problems...it is a long-term commitment and process.
 - ◆ It is a continuous process and is an extension of the bargaining process.
8. Don't try to solve big problems first, start with small problems first.

How does the process work?

- ◆ Deal with issues...
- ◆ Establish relationships...it is not the grievance process which is adversarial in nature.
- ◆ Use problem solving techniques to find consensus.