

# AASBO Summer Conference

## CSI Bargaining – Collaboration, Sharing, Listening

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# Presentation Outline

- Bargaining processes
- The relationship
- Trust
- Listening
- Understanding
- Access to information
- One way to do it

# Bargaining Processes

- Some Districts choose to not bargain with employee groups.
- Traditional bargaining.
- Interest based bargaining, sometimes called interest based negotiations or Win-Win bargaining.

# Traditional Bargaining

- Typically not a lot of discussion,
- Each party delivers their respective messages – what is desired, what is being offered and there is not a great deal of opportunity for discussion, relationship building, etc.
- Our culture is somebody wins and somebody loses and this is what traditional bargaining is about.
- If I win, then you must lose – it is the belief that it is a zero sum game.
- Generally no one is happy with the results from traditional bargaining.

# Interest Based Negotiations

- The process is designed to enable all parties to listen to each other, identify important values and work toward a common resolution.
- Focus on issues not personalities,
- Focus on interests not positions,
- Create options to satisfy mutual and separate interests,
- Evaluate options with standards not power,
- This is a collaborative process where everyone has input and that input is equally valued.
- The process allows participants to see both sides of an issue without jeopardizing their interests or values.

# Communication

- When both parties understand their interests can be met, communication can begin.
- This is the value of the interest-based approach – it allows communication to take place.

# The Relationship

- An argument is always about what has been made more important than the relationship.
  - Hugh Prather
- Assumptions are the termites of relationships.
  - Henry Winkler
- The result of long-term relationships is better and better quality, and lower and lower costs.
  - W. Edwards Deming

# The Relationship

- Regardless of the process used in bargaining it is the relationship between the district administration and the employee bargaining group(s) that determines whether or not bargaining will be successful.
- A solid relationship built on a foundation of trust will see a district through the worst of times.
- The interest-based approach probably takes ten times as long as traditional bargaining, but that is because it provides the opportunity for fully sharing information, asking questions, hearing all ideas, etc. – what it ends up doing is building a very solid relationship.
- Bargaining lasts a few months, the relationship lasts forever.

# Trust

- “Trust is a must or your game is a bust.” – this quote came from the great William Joseph “Billy” Welu and is about bowling, but it applies equally to working with employee groups.
- Without trust there is no bargaining process that will yield satisfactory results.
- Trust is the key.
- Trust must be built over time, there is no other way.

# Trust

- “It takes years to build up trust, and only seconds to destroy it.” ~ anonymous
- “Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships.” – Stephen Covey
- “Love many, trust few and always paddle your own canoe.” ~ Connie Elliott

# Building Trust

- Listening,
- Seek to truly understand,
- Full access to data,
- Inclusion in decisions,
- Genuinely seek to make the employee group representatives successful – they also have people to whom they must answer.

# Listening

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

-Stephen Covey

# What are some qualities of good listener?

- The ability to not only listen to the content of the message, but acknowledge the emotion behind it as well.
- The capacity to receive the whole meaning by concentrating on the words, tone, gestures, and posture.

# Tips to Active Listening

- Learn to want to listen.
- Stay focused on the speaker.
- Control your emotional hot buttons.
- Listen for the unsaid (feelings) as well as the said.
- When there is opportunity for clarification ask about the unsaid!

# Empathetic Listening

- Listening with the goal to see things as others see them.
- The ability to share in another's emotion, thoughts and feeling.

# Access to Data

- Do not just provide the financial data – explain the financial data and encourage questions.
- Show employee groups everything about the budget – **everything!** – it is very powerful.
- Send your budget spreadsheets to the association leadership periodically.
- Bring your spreadsheets to the bargaining table and put them up on the screen, so the entire group can see how different things affect the budget.

# Access to Data

- Providing access as well as explanations to the data is one of the most powerful things you can do to build trust.
- Most people, once they have the data, and they believe it to be complete, focus on developing solutions and not trying to figure out what is being hidden.

# Ask the Question!

- What must administration do so association leadership can sell the package to their group.
- Ask them how you can help them succeed.
- The association leadership's success is administration's success.

# On-going Communication

- Things change all year long – keep employee organizations in the loop.
- When the association President is asked a question and he/she can say, “Yes I am aware of this and have discussed it with District administration” it is very powerful.
- By making that President successful you are making the administration’s job much easier – they do not forget you when it is their turn to reciprocate – you will get the heads up, you will get the benefit of the doubt that you otherwise would not have gotten were the trust not there.

# Other

- Be sincere and genuine in your interest to listen to what employee groups say.
- When you do or say something wrong – apologize.
- When you make a mistake - admit it.
- When data changes - communicate it.
- When you have a question - ask it.
- Do what you say you are going to do.

# One Way to Build a Budget

- Cabinet develops “proposed” budget reductions and reviews with Board and then other groups.
- Budget development cycle includes periodic reviews with all groups – association leadership, parents, administrators and the board.
- Superintendent committee – presidents of employee associations and district level parent group.
- Each group sees data a minimum of two times before decisions are finalized.

# One Way to Build a Budget

- Process allows input before decisions are made.
- Process allows questions, discussion and opportunities for other creative solutions, additional alternative proposals.
- Participants are involved and have input as to what is ultimately recommended.
- The superintendent makes the final recommendation to the board, but the employee and parent leaders have had ample opportunity to be heard before any decisions are finalized.

# Does it work?

2009-10 bargaining

- Huge funding cuts
- Laid off 250 staff
- 6.2 % Salary reduction

**86%** of the teachers' association ratified the compensation package.

# Does it work?

2010-11 bargaining

Sales tax fails:

- No salary increase
- Over 100 positions cut

Sales tax passes:

- No layoffs
- Salary cut from prior year restored

**99%** approval from association membership  
prior to sales tax election