

LEARNING TO EXERCISE POWER

WHEN TO BE FIRM WITHOUT BEING MEAN

LESSONS FROM LAST YEAR

- Burnout is real.
- Teachers, administrators, and board members are overworked, overwhelmed, and under attack.
- There is a shortage of quality, qualified individuals willing and able to do the work.
 - Day to day
 - Year to year



LESSONS FROM LAST YEAR

- Teachers cannot be forced to work – even if their work stoppage is “illegal,” no teachers means no students.
- Any change to working conditions must be bargained
 - Bargaining need not be complicated, formal, or specific
 - But the union can force you to retain “status quo” if they don’t get what they want
 - Even if you forced a change, that change requires staff buy-in

CULTURE

- Be tough on issues
- Be soft on people
 - “When you’re up to your eyeballs in alligators, it’s difficult to remember your original purpose was to drain the swamp.”
 - Stay focused on your purpose.
 - There needs to be both **compassion** and **neutrality** in your understanding of and resolution for the problem.
 - Emotion and ego are the enemies of solution

POWER

- Board's power
 - Patience
- Union's power
 - PERSISTENCE



IMPASSE

- IELRB looks at 5 factors:
 - the bargaining history;
 - the good faith of the parties in negotiations;
 - the length of the negotiations;
 - the importance of the issue or issues as to which there is disagreement; and
 - the contemporaneous understanding of the parties as to the state of negotiations.

FORMATION VS. INTERIM BARGAIN

- Mandatory bargaining over wages, hours, terms and conditions
- Contract bargaining occurs between agreements
 - Generally, no impasse implementation – you bargain to agreement
- Interim bargains happen *during* an agreement
 - Generally, you may implement over impasse if the issue is not clearly limited by the agreement or law

STRATEGY

- Discuss informally first
- Set deadlines for implementation, if you must, that are realistic but fair
- Communicate your core principles and deadlines for their implementation early, regularly, and in writing.
- Be prepared to meet
- Be patient

CREDIBILITY

- Communicate not just what you need, but why you need it.
 - Do your homework to know what you need and why – and be careful not to oversell the distinction your wants as needs.
 - Don't oversell
- Communicate honestly, transparently
- Communicate once.
 - Once you are understood, be patient.

CREDIBILITY

- Board controls pace early
 - Start timely, understand history
- Union controls pace late
 - The time you end at the beginning will signal the time you end at the end
 - What you've done before will be what you do again
 - No thanks for a gift – give freely, but expect no return
 - Being consistent buys credibility. Being Santa Claus does not.



COVID-19

- Meeting over Zoom

- Be vigilant about control of presence on camera
 - EVERY FACE CAN BE SEEN ALL THE TIME
- Be vigilant about who is talking – 1 person at a time
 - Resist the urge for distraction.
- Keep meetings tight, and short – 2 or 3 hours, well-spaced.
- Prepare ahead to be productive. Keep joint meetings short, caucuses and breakouts shorter.
- All agreements in writing.



ISSUES

- Back pay during bargaining
- Restrictive use of funds (CARES, ESSER, Grants)
- Safety
- TEACHER SHORTAGE
 - Options?
 - Hiring bonuses (bargaining)
 - Scholarships (risky pre-employment)
 - Tuition reimbursement
 - Recruiting

ISSUES

- TEACHER SHORTAGE

- Options?

- Increase base pay (but be careful with SCHEDULES - particularly indexed schedules)
 - Remember you *must* meet minimum salary and wage (not optional)
 - Control the controllables (culture?)

- “COVID” Leave

- Evaluations

- Every 3 years for tenured staff (from 2) – still annually for nontenured staff

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!



- Stay focused on **solutions**
- Communicate thoroughly until you are **understood** (which is not synonymous with agreement)
- Be **creative**
- Be **compassionate**
- Be *patient*

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