

Course Descriptions

2017 WEA Statewide Bargaining Conference

BARGAINING 1

Course Description:

The process of collective bargaining is a fundamentally important means of establishing wages, hours, and working conditions in the public schools. Such conditions apply not only to the members of the Association, but also establish the environment and conditions under which the education process takes place. In effect, the bargaining process establishes the learning environment in which students receive an education. It is therefore important that those who engage in the bargaining process have the necessary skill set to be able to produce effective results, to the benefit of all. It is also necessary that negotiated contracts include fair compensation for the employees who invest themselves in teaching and supporting the learning of children and the operation of schools. Toward that end, in this session participants will have the opportunity to practice bargaining skills, techniques and strategies through bargaining simulations, exercises and discussions.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will understand the legal basis for collective bargaining in Washington State.
2. Participants will learn the basic styles of bargaining, and their application.
3. Participants will learn the elements found in effective contract language and bargaining proposals.
4. Participants will learn ways of collecting information from their colleagues in order to establish priorities for improving contracts.
5. Participants will learn the sequence of steps that are typical in contract negotiations.
6. Participants will learn the various roles taken by members of a bargaining team, and the function of each.
7. Participants will practice bargaining skills and team roles through simulations and debriefs.

BARGAINING 2

Course Description:

This course builds on the skills taught in Bargaining 1 and will focus specifically on strategies that local teams can use to bargain assertively for compensation increases. Participants will learn how to use relevant research and external standards, such as the report of the state Compensation Technical Work Group. The effective use of coordinated pattern bargaining with other locals in your area will be explored. Additionally, crafting clear proposals and contract language and the use of more

advanced table strategies will be taught, with an emphasis on the skills that will help negotiators be successful in attaining significant increases in member compensation.

Pre-requisite: Bargaining 1

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will learn to write clear proposals and to recognize ambiguous contract language.
2. Participants will practice writing clear bargaining proposals.
3. Participants will learn the fundamentals of goal-setting in the collective bargaining context, and will begin to use the “blueprinting” tool to establish priorities and settlement standards.
4. Participants will practice setting bargaining priorities and settlement standards.
5. Participants will learn the importance and function of Coordinated Bargaining Clusters as a means of sharing information and progress with other units during negotiations.
6. Participants will learn criteria for determining whether to use positional or interest-based bargaining methods, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
7. Participants will practice setting bargaining priorities and settlement standards.

WRITING and ENFORCING CLEAR LANGUAGE

Course Description:

This course for experienced bargainers is designed as an in-depth look at issues involved in writing and enforcing the best possible contract provisions and understanding the underlying legal reasons for the manner in which the language should be written.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will learn how to write clear, concise contract language that gives the union the strongest advantage
2. Participants will learn and use contractual/legal strategies to create the best enforceable language
3. Participants will write their own proposals and engage in improving language that currently exists in their own contracts

GRIEVANCE 1

Course Description:

The rights, compensation, and working conditions described in your contract are only meaningful if they are enforced. Sometimes there are legitimate differences of opinion between the local and the district regarding the meaning of negotiated language, and

occasionally an administrator will simply choose not to comply with the contract. In order to preserve the meaning of the contract and protect the members of the local, the Association must use the grievance process. This course will acquaint you with that process and prepare you to identify common contract violations. Participants will learn how to draft and present a grievance, how to represent a member in an investigation, and will become familiar with “just cause,” due process, and other legal and contractual rights of union members.

Course objectives:

1. Participants will be aware of the duty of fair representation
2. Participants will be aware of the steps of a standard grievance contractual grievance process
3. Participants will be familiar with the role of the union rep in an investigatory interview, including the application of *Weingarten* rights
4. Participants will be familiar with the test of Just Cause and the procedures of due process
5. Participants will be able to analyze common situations and develop a grievance strategy
6. Participants will be able to draft a basic grievance, including description of the violation, the violated contract language, and a remedy.

BUILDING STRENGTH through the BARGAINING CYCLE

Course Description:

The strength to gain a good settlement is best developed over the course of the entire year prior to contract expiration. The locals that get the best results take steps long in advance to select and train bargaining team members, listen to the needs of their members, develop clear goals, establish regular communication with members and community allies, and engage the members in advocating for a fair contract. This session will talk about how a local association can plan and implement these organizing and communication strategies, build infrastructure, and apply the collective power of the local to put real power behind their bargaining team.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will learn various methods of making a connection with local members
2. Participants will learn a variety of ways of collecting and interpreting member opinions
3. Participants will learn about methods of internal communication, including newsletters, e-letters, websites, blogs, and social media
4. Participants will learn how to set goals and identify appropriate allies and decision makers
5. Participants will learn ways to engage members and allies in order to attain the bargaining goals of the local Association

CURRENT ISSUES

Course Description:

Collective bargaining occurs in a constantly changing environment. This has seldom been more true than in the years immediately before us. WEA locals must prepare to negotiate through the impact of new legislation that changes education funding and the parameters for bargaining. We will soon see the end of the SAM and will have an opportunity to significantly restructure and increase base pay. As state funding increases, local levy restrictions will kick in in 2019, leading to new parameters for supplemental and “enrichment” pay. How these factors can be addressed through bargaining will look different in each of the next two years. In this session we will look at these changes and discuss together how to maximize the opportunities to make gains for our members.

Course Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the basics of the anticipated changes in state and local school funding for 2018-19 and 2019-20.
2. Participants will learn the bargaining parameters for each of these two years.
3. Participants will see examples of base salary schedules that can be negotiated to replace the defunct SAM, and will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the models.
4. Participants will learn about the separation between state and local funding, and how local dollars can be used for TRI and supplemental contracts, in keeping with the developing state definitions of “enrichment”.
5. Participants will learn about the mandatory placement of all school employees into the yet to be developed School Employee Benefits Board insurance plans, and what this means in terms of local contracts.
6. Participants will consider the various factors that could cause some of these situations to be further altered in coming months and years.
7. Participants will discuss how these changes will impact their own contract bargaining and will develop potential strategies for success.