



Cornell University
ILR School

Conflict and Labor Relations Assistance in Public Schools

Interest-based Negotiations: ILR provides training and facilitation of interest-based negotiations, (also known as mutual gains negotiation or collaborative bargaining,) for contract negotiations. Administrators, union representatives, and school board members are introduced to principles which recognize separate and legitimate interests, and provide a systematic method for getting those interests met. The approach fosters the development of creative problem-solving that will extend the capacity of both school systems and teachers to meet the demands of new student populations and the call for school reform that includes restructuring. The principles are useful guides for day-to-day workplace negotiation as well.

Decision Making and Consensus Building: The number of constituencies represented on school committees and on school boards requires that teams have tools for reaching effective and supported decisions. We conduct workshops with district leadership and school teams to help them learn methods and skills for group decision making that takes into account the many differing concerns in a school community. As part of interactive training sessions, we provide skill-building exercises and discussion to help groups immediately get to work on real problems. We also provide facilitation of decision-making processes where a 3rd party is useful to reaching consensus.

Strategic Planning: ILR offers schools assistance in the process of visioning and planning for change. We support school-wide change models which involve all stakeholders in contributing to the process. We encourage an approach to long term change which is supported by ongoing research, professional development and a continuous cycle of reflection and action. Our method is to link visioning and planning with work already underway in the school.

Labor-Management Relationship Building: Partnership between unions and administration/boards can be an effective way to advance the shared concerns of school district constituents. In keeping with our commitment to cooperative learning, the services we provide in school districts are often co-designed with client representatives. This work brings valuable tools and opportunities to educational communities that are breaking old habits and formulating promising agendas for the schools of the future.

For more information, contact:

Sally Klingel E-mail: slk12@cornell.edu

Tel: 607/255-7022