

206 – Resolution of Conflict Procedure

Resolution of Conflict Procedure

Disputes occur regularly and are an expected part of human interaction. Disagreements among Trustees and with the Superintendent similarly occur from time to time. Left unattended, disputes may lead to conflict that interferes with Board governance and Board-Superintendent relations. The Board regards conflicts as normally occurring and as opportunities to increase understandings of differences, enhance working relationships and improve individual performance. Collaborative, inclusive, fair and developmental conflict resolution processes are based on the following interpersonal relational norms:

- Appreciation for the contributions of others
- Openness to diverse views and new ideas
- Respectful and emotionally safe interpersonal relationships
- Open and honest contributions to discussions
- Positive group dynamics (tone, body language), and
- Focus on the group task

1.0 Conflict Resolution Expectations

The Board has determined the following conflict resolution expectations. These expectations are intended to encourage learning, flexibility and responsiveness, and to avoid procedural rigidity.

1.1 Understanding

Disagreements present opportunities to seek additional information and create new understandings. Processes need to encourage inquiry, development of new and shared perceptions, and agreement.

1.2 Timeliness

Conflicts should be addressed as soon as possible and not left unattended to grow and impact unnecessarily on others and the work of the Board.

1.3 Fairness

Processes need to be open and equitable extending opportunities for participation in problem identification and generation of solutions.

206 – Resolution of Conflict Procedure

1.4 Focus

Resolution processes and communications need to focus on issues and outcomes not people. The expectation is to build the team and enhance Board governance.

1.5 Respect

Interactions must be characterised by care and regard for the individual, empowerment and appropriate confidentiality.

2.0 Conflict Resolution Procedure

Trustees and the Superintendent are encouraged to adhere to the conflict resolution expectations:

2.1 Attend to the conflict, disagreement or dispute within 7 days of becoming aware of the issue.

2.2 Address the issue with the individual directly with a view to resolving the matter privately.

2.3 Where a resolution is not found privately and there continues to be merit in seeking resolution, bring the matter to the attention of the Chair or, where the Chair is absent or the conflict involves the Chair, the Vice Chair, who shall:

2.3.1 Within 14 days, take steps personally to inquire about the conflict with each individual involved;

2.3.2 Seek to resolve the conflict in consultation with the individuals involved; and

2.3.3 Treat the conflict and information surrounding the conflict confidentially.

2.4 Where the Chair is unable to resolve the conflict, there continues to be merit in seeking resolution. With the agreement of the involved individuals in respect to timing and external consultant, the Chair may engage an external consultant to resolve the conflict.

2.5 Where the consultant is unable to resolve the conflict within 28 days, there continues to be merit in seeking resolution. With the agreement of the involved individuals, the Chair may bring the conflict to the attention of the Board in a Closed Meeting.

The Board shall:

2.5.1 Within 14 days, initiate steps to inquire about the conflict with each individual involved;

2.5.2 Seek to resolve the conflict in consultation with the individuals involved; and

206 – Resolution of Conflict Procedure

- 2.5.3 Treat the conflict and information surrounding the conflict confidentially.
- 2.6 Where the Board is unable to resolve the conflict within 28 days and there continues to be merit in resolving the conflict the Board may, by motion of the Board made in a Closed Meeting impose a resolution to the conflict. The resolution shall be included in the public report of the Board on the Closed Meeting and the matter shall be closed.

Legal References:

Monitoring Method:	<i>Internal Reports/Board and Superintendent</i>
Monitoring Frequency:	<i>Annual</i>
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