Turning Around Conflict on Your Board

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Association of Alaska School Boards
Conflict on your Board - Setting the stage:

Conflict is inevitable

For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate.

Margaret Heffernan
It’s no Wonder we have issues!
75% people are significantly

* Diverse members
* Passionate people
* Shared leadership
* Political positions

“I don’t like to be difficult, but it’s the only thing I’m really good at!”
Conflict on your Board - Setting the stage:

Causes of conflict

- Change
- Diversity
- Limitations
- Innovation
Conflict on your Board - Setting the stage:

Conflict has consequences - good & bad

- Board Effectiveness
- Board Stability
- Board Respect

Student Achievement
Conflict on your Board - Setting the stage

Conflict management - who is responsible

The board
The board chair
The superintendent
So who are these ROGUE Board Members

- willful disregard of rules
- routinely uses *implied* authority
- micro-manager with an over-inflated opinion of his or her abilities
- seeks alliances for personal agenda
- does not subscribe to a code of ethics
Sharing stories bad behavior

To begin with,
I’d like to apologise
for my behaviour at
our recent meeting!
What Can be Done?

"I have to keep reminding myself that some people were just raised differently."

Nothing! Well almost nothing!

lessonslearnedinlife.com
Working Styles
Conflict Cycle

- Escalation
- Challenge
- Confrontation
- Crisis
- Communication
- Compromise
- Change
- Calm
• Assess the situation
• Stop wishing they were different
• Take a step back
• Formulate a plan
• Implement your plan
• Monitor effectiveness
The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Assertiveness
- Assertive
- Unassertive

Cooperativeness
- Uncooperative
- Cooperative

Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth
Ten Strategies for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

- Ask Questions
- Distinguish Perspectives
- Think Twice
- Build Self-Awareness
- Be Flexible
- Recognize the Complexity
- Be Honest
- Avoid Stereotyping
- Listen Actively
- Respect Differences

Cross cultural communication
Group Dynamics

Righteousness, Entrenched, Peer Pressure, Escalation

“I suppose I’ll be the one to mention the elephant in the room.”
Turnaround - Board Norms

• Board Culture

• Build Relationships

• Resolve without hesitation!

“ Aren’t you glad we had this meeting to resolve our conflict?”
Change your Behavior

Understand the difficult person’s behavior before it gets out of hand

Place the difficult person’s behavior under a magnifying glass

See the motive behind it

Do not let the behaviour of others destroy your inner peace.

www.healthythoughts.in
Find Common Ground

• Emphasize your similarities

• Find common ground

• Reducing differences is essential
Try to visualize solutions
Watch your body language
Push back respectfully
Call the bully on their behavior
Focus on THEM not on how you feel
What did you just say to me/us?
Your language is disrespectful if you want to speak to me...
I will no longer tolerate your abusive behavior
Instead of “I feel” flip it to YOU
Team up with others
Hold a board retreat with facilitator
Bullies admire people who don’t let them get away with bad behavior
Take command and stop behavior calmly and respectfully
Be firm and clear
Instead of yelling back pull out pen paper and ask them to repeat
Analyze your behavior
Maintain sense of humor
Maintain your emotional stability and self confidence
Portray positive attitude
If they do not see they are getting to you they will stop
You can turn around conflict on your board!

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We at AASB are always here to help you!