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While notable successes have occurred with Interest Based Bargaining, such as the recent overhaul of comp time language, IBB has become problematic primarily by failing to allow adequate progress in addressing contract language changes. With a salary freeze entering its third year, and increased health plan changes and premium costs being imposed on employees, BFT decided to abandon the Interest Based Bargaining approach for the Traditional Bargaining method.

The difference between Interest Based Bargaining and Traditional Bargaining can best be explained by the primary adjective used to describe each: for Interest Based Bargaining that word is “collaborative,” for Traditional Bargaining it is “adversarial.” However, is one approach better than the other? Often, a compromise can work best, and BFT believes that an IBB-Traditional hybrid bargaining approach would be beneficial and is achievable.

What would such a hybrid look like and what would be the expectations for it? The major focus would revolve around discussion at the table. In Traditional Bargaining, each side has a Chief Negotiator who is the only person permitted to speak. Any other discussion occurs only among the members of each team during an extended period away from the table known as a “caucus.” In a hybrid model, any member of a team may speak or add to the discussion after being recognized by one of the Chief Negotiators. This would allow for the free flow of ideas and progress of discussion, and thus a better chance for clarification of positions before each side dismisses for individual caucus.

In the long run, BFT believes this opening up of the discussion at the table would reinforce the collaborative attitude of both sides as shaped by years of IBB training and experience, and it would further the development of a positive problem solving relationship between the teams. Of course, both the BFT and Brevard County School Board teams would have to fully agree to such a hybrid approach.

Both Teams have agreed to the following rules:

1. Civility;
2. Honesty;
3. Chief Negotiators speak;
4. Both chief negotiators can ask each other permission to speak to a member of the other team;
5. No cell phones (\$40 charge);
6. Full Participation by both teams
7. Breaks as needed; and
8. Name Tags.

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