

303 Conflict Resolution Practices and Policy

Adopted: January 28, 2016.

Guided by the goal to preserve, protect, and foster positive and effective working relationships between the Board of Governors and the WSBA Executive Team and staff, the following principles and guidelines shall be used to guide the resolution of conflict between board members or between board and staff members:

- 1) A Board Member shall always be mindful that their position carries with it certain powers, influence, and authority that must be exercised fairly, wisely, respectfully, and with restraint. Accordingly, a Board Member when interacting with all members of WSBA staff, shall not misuse or abuse their authority or position by placing unreasonable or inappropriate demands upon staff members.
- 2) A Board Member shall strive to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in all communications and dialogue with staff, using appropriate channels regarding requests for special assistance regarding Board agenda matters, or inquiries from WSBA members in a Board Member's district.
- 3) In the event a problem or conflict arises between Board Members or between a Board Member and Staff Member, the involved parties shall strive to resolve the matter by first attempting to discuss the matter with one another in person, or by phone. If a Board or Staff Member feels uncomfortable attempting to resolve the conflict directly, he/she may seek support or assistance from the Executive Director, Human Resources Director, or President. The involved parties shall pursue a one-on-one resolution, always taking the high road, and in a climate of mutual respect, trust, candor, and humility, while recognizing potential power dynamics that might impact the communication and ability to enter into a discussion directly.
- 4) Should the problem, conflict, or misunderstanding not prove resolvable, the Board Member and/or staff member shall apprise the Executive Director and President, with the full knowledge of both parties, and seek to have the matter further addressed and resolved by the ED, President, and any other appropriate participants. The Staff member and Board Member should both be afforded full and equal opportunity to participate and express their views in order to reach agreement and reconciliation.
- 5) All parties involved in seeking and bringing about a resolution should strive to be understanding, respectful, forgiving, and working to improve one's communications in the interest of doing what is in the best interests of the Board, staff, and the WSBA as a whole.

Note: This policy is intended to supplement not replace the current Problem Resolution Policy in the WSBA Employee Handbook (D-5).