

Staff Association stated that they are in a critical situation with morale and they have to quit blaming others and just move forward.

Cliff asked if Dr. Croskery could speak to us about the relationship between CBE and Staff Association and CBE and its employees.

Dr. Croskery would never get into low blows in trying to differentiate the membership from the association. When an executive is in office they have the support of the members and when the executive speaks, they speak for their members. There are many dynamics in the relationship with their members. He suspects that some groups are happier about their relationships than others. But there is not a simple explanation because different relationships are role specific. The biggest missing piece is that we do not feel as one large group.

Some people are significantly unhappy with work or their employer, some people are very unhappy and some people are angry. When this combination exists, it eats away at you as a human being and these feelings are extremely corrosive. A simple response is, go work somewhere else but many people cannot do that, and nevertheless, we need to get to the point where all of our support staff feels reasonably happy about coming into work. We cannot point to the Association and say that is your problem. It is CBE's problem. What do we do about it?

Staff Association stated that they do not know what changed but employees used to be proud to say they worked for the CBE but now it seems embarrassing. Why?

This is one of the issues that we need to wrestle with.

Dr. Croskery shared a number of things to guide and help with the work. Essentially we have to do the work ourselves but it is his responsibility to create an arena where that work is done.

Huge parameters for this work are the Board's governing documents. Administration cannot stray from the Ends and Executive Limitations. Ideas need to be screened against the Ends and Executive Limitations. Some guidance will help:

- 1) Policy provisions
- 2) This is a research project – be aware of the phrase “garbage in garbage out”
- 3) The intent of my proposal as presented shifted when it got into the mediator's hands and the reference point is the mediator's comments. His issues must be addressed. I don't think the mediator and I come from the same place.
- 4) Mediator's recommendations prevalue over Dr. Croskery's intent
- 5) Research question/common sense – what kind of truth do you get? Vested interest or wedded to many years to a perspective, have to be careful with the answer.

- 6) Array of humanistic wording – collaboration, cooperation, inclusion, accountability, responsibility, some discussion held on these concepts and lay at the heart of this relationship.
- 7) How far back should we go? Is this a recently emerging concern or is this something that goes back a number of years?
- 8) Look at comparisons with other organizations
- 9) Lots of ways of getting at this relationship – tools and access to get at nature of relationship
- 10) Accountability Services have done many employee surveys – consider the work to be relevant or not
- 11) Goals needs to be realistic –limit to what we can do in the time we have
- 12) What does the Chief’s Task Force mean – does someone else respond to it, need to get report to the chief before he leaves and get his response – strategically important as to who gets to look at this
- 13) Issues of personality – need to determine what weight you give to personality – does there need to be a change in leadership or executive
- 14) Communicate well and ask how do we do that? Provide information to all stakeholders on the Staff Association and CBE websites
- 15) Sometimes look at organizations and what are the key areas where things come together – i.e. grievances
- 16) Resource allocation particularly the RAM model.
- 17) How do we make decisions in the CBE?

Dr. Croskery used four frames from Bowman and Deal’s work: structure of organization, human resource frame, political frame and symbolic frame:

Structure – how do you divide the work up?

Human Resource Frame – how the organization tends to the needs of its members – who are the members, how are their needs met

Political Frame – power and resource allocation – who has the power and how scarce resources are allocated

Symbolic Frame – deep values. Core values of system is tranquility

Questions

Q: When we met, there was a conversation about how cynical the membership has become, what needed to be reported by the deadline of Dec 15 and battling a grand slam. Are you still in line with that?

A: Dr. Croskery reiterated that support staff needs to see some positive advances and not to assume that the Task Force is overly cosmetic and just a way to solve a strike.

He also stated that in the long term the relationship is far more important than any item in the collective agreement. You can either build a collective agreement on a relationship with trust or it could become a

defensive routine - protect ourselves from being screwed or do us in. We need good contract language.

A Staff Association member commented that this speaks largely of whom you are Brendan and why the Task Force is here. The positive comments from you and your desire to better this relationship beyond your retirement. You have given the Task Force a big mandate. When you initiated the Task Force, nobody doubted your intent and the items identified in the mediator's report are concrete and something in there may allow the homerun to be hit. From the Staff Association perspective, the intent behind the Task Force you initiated is it has to go beyond December 15 – it is a long term program and we thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Naomi thanked Brendan, Jean and Bill for attending and a five minute break was taken.

Naomi reconvened the Task Force group.

3) Housekeeping Items

- It was decided that the Task Force would consist of four members each from the Staff Association and CBE as well as a Chairperson and recording secretary. Additional support would be resourced as needed.
- At the end of each day, we will look at the minutes and will decide what will be posted on the Staffroom under the Chief Superintendent's heading and in Staff Association's website. Key points only will be posted.
- Today's meeting will end at 3:00 p.m.

4) Setting the Context for Working Together - Naomi

Our activity is going to be on Focused Conversation which is an international association for public participation process. This process looks at the issues, values, gut reactions and ways to move forward.

Woodrow Wilson stated "There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed. So if we are separate, it is no longer for the common good."

Nothing exists unless it is in relationship to something else. Until we figure out what our relationship is we are siloed.

Some of the more tactical and technical work will fall out of the relationship as we move it along.

Naomi observed that in Brendan's letter he talked about the symptoms of this problem appearing in the scepticism associated with phrases such as "trust me" "broken promises" and "appreciation abuse". In the book "The Speed of Trust" by Stephen Covey Jr. he states that the common thing to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization, nation, economy and civilization and if removed will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love. That one thing is trust and trust is established through action.

The expectations around our work together are about action, changing behaviour and moving on something. The summary of behaviour is

- 1) Talk straight, be honest, tell the truth, demonstrate integrity,
- 2) Demonstrate respect – genuinely care for one another, respect the dignity of every person and role, treat everyone with respect especially those who can't do anything for you, don't fake caring
- 3) Create transparency – tell the truth, get real and genuine, err on the side of disclosure, don't have hidden agendas, don't hide information
- 4) Right the wrongs – make things right when you are wrong, apologize quickly, make restitution where possible, don't let pride get in the way of doing the right thing
- 5) Show loyalty – give credit freely, acknowledge contributions of others, don't disclose other private information, speak about people as if they were present
- 6) Deliver results – establish a track record of results, get the right things done, be on time and within budget, don't overpromise and under deliver, don't make excuses for not delivering
- 7) Get better – continuously improve, be a constant learner, act on feedback you receive, thank people for feedback,
- 8) Confront reality – take issues head on, address tough stuff directly, don't skirt the real issues, don't bury your head in the sand
- 9) Clarify expectation – disclose and reveal expectations, validate them, renegotiate them if needed, don't violate expectations, don't assume expectations are clear or shared
- 10) Practice accountability – hold yourself accountable, hold other accountable, don't avoid or shirk responsibility don't blame others or point fingers

- 11) Listen first – listen before you speak, understand, diagnose, listen with ears, eyes and heart, don't presume you have all the answers or all the questions, don't assume you know what matters most to others
- 12) Keep commitments – say what you are going to do and do them, make commitments carefully and keep them, make keeping commitments the symbol of your honor, don't break confidences, don't attempt to "PR" your way out of a commitment you have broken

Extend trust and extend trust unconditionally to those who are trying to gain your trust, don't withhold trust because there is a risk involved.

Based on our expectation for behaviour, what is our purpose and that is closing the gap for all children.

Short video shown – Dalton Sherman – "Dallas's answer to Barack Obama"

I believe in this group and we need to believe in one another as colleagues and as members of an organization that can make a difference to kids. This work is deep work, not cosmetic work and as we continue to remember Dalton Sherman, we will have somewhere to start.

5) Activity

Focused Conversation is a not only a way to look at an issue but to look at how it got to be where it is. There is a series of four questions asked –

- 1) Objective – what are the issues, facts
- 2) Reflective – how does that make me feel, impact me
- 3) Interpretative – what does it mean for us, values around it and
- 4) What do we do from there – decisional questions –

At this time everyone went into their group and discussion started on the four questions.

Meeting reconvened at 12:30 p.m

6) Review of Agenda for the Afternoon

- 1) Discussion on priorities – quick win – identify what might be done before our next meeting.
- 2) Explore purpose and establish terms of reference
- 3) Decide what is going to be communicated on the websites (both CBE and Staff Association)
- 4) How often do we meet and schedule the next meeting

- 5) A report to Dr. Croskery needs to be written by December 15 – who is writing it and discussion on the content. (It might be necessary to engage a researcher at ILS and enlist their support)

All members moved to the sticky notes posted on the wall to talk about and share the morning activity.

Focused Conversation

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

CBE	Staff Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective agreements are in conflict with one another • How are the people in the jobs really feeling? • Is there a disconnect between the Association leadership and the membership? • Is there a disconnect between senior management of CBE and principals and managers? • We do not know what the real issues are? Trust? Respect? • Not everyone in the Staff Association knows/understands the issues • Moving target as we try to clarify an issue, the focus shifts to something else • Are issues in the Mediator’s report clearly understood? • Do we know why the specific issues cannot be implemented? • Does the current Resource Allocation Method work? Who does it work for? • Principals and top management have directed that CBE rely on more management rights to organize the workplace • Does the current Resource Allocation Method work? Who does it work for? • Some support staff are treated as disposable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust around follow-through – promises made – Working Relationship document not in action • Service recognition – 1st milestone – after 15 years – incentives – acknowledgement of achievements, retirements, deaths • Communication – entire organization – sender and receiver taking equal responsibility – due diligence • Misunderstanding of the issues • Understand where the real issues are – misunderstand motives i.e. we don’t want to “hire” Chief Superintendent, but would like to be part of the conversation • Marginalized staff – terminology – professional development days • Mistrust of central administration (understanding what happens in schools) (understanding what happened “downtown”) • Mystery about how everything works • Self-perception – lack of buy-in by support staff – do not (believe) see our own value in the organization • Inequity in treatment – marginalized – recruitment contracted out (TSSI) – lay offs, hours cut, uncertainty around roles, arbitrary changes, lack of acknowledgement for experience

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and funding drive deployment decisions • Why is there a disconnect between the employee and the employer? • Tension between needs of students/schools and the interests of the employee • Seniority does not respect the different skill requirements of many jobs • Some employees are reluctant to take advantage of learning opportunities • There are different expectations of professional employment versus hourly employment – a tension here • Inconsistencies – treatment? – inclusion? – expectations, both employees and management • Managers/Principals do not follow the collective agreement (cut deals) • People do not understand the parameters of their jobs – overstep or understep • There is a contrast – I believe → there is a tension between Main Body and Professional • Collective agreement does not meet the interests or needs of managers/principals or the members of the Association • Scope of position description seems to support “Supervision of students” – employees and management interpret this differently 	<p>and expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not understanding each other issues – not open to listening to each other’s issues • Interest-Based – negotiations – mutual interest – helped to understand where everyone was – hierarchical system • Lack of involvement in decision-making i.e. internal RAM model, external pressures, should be working together to solve – we want to be part of solutions • Trust “I’m afraid” • Uncertainty – not knowing from day-day, month-month – hours of work, what role is, tasks, security of income, choice • Not being trusted – not knowing what the CBE is dealing with – two-way street •
--	---

WHAT ARE THE CONFLICTING VALUES?

CBE	Staff Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Values” – principles, quality, standards causing our actions • Glass half empty rather than glass half full 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PeopleSoft – blame the technology vs. impacts on individuals • System said – we have the knowledge within the organization

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability → standards of collective agreement • Accountability → respectful treatment of people • Shared Leadership vs. Managed Control • Values and relationship disconnect exists in other parts of the organization • Personal responsibility vs. managed control • Voice vs. control or decision making • Rights of an individual → common good • Consistency/Security vs. Innovation, risk taking, creativity • Students centered and employee centered 	<p>vs. going outside the organization for expertise now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union – seen as an impediment (preventing CBE from doing “their” work) vs. union as a support for the work (being part of the solution) • Changes occurred in what is valued – reaction to that – standard that guided our actions was collaboration • Accountability – recognizing in <u>all</u> – we all have some • Honouring commitments made vs. NOT i.e. Working Relationship Commitment • The only important employees are teachers • Skills-theory vs. experience skills – recruitment done by outsiders who don’t know what is needed • Management rights vs. employee involvement • “Value” – it’s about the kids – not sacrificing for the kids – who gets stepped on? • Core Business – it is about the students, but not at the expense of the employees • Don’t value the relational aspects vs. task oriented
---	---

WHAT ARE YOUR GUT REACTIONS?

CBE	Staff Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty • A degree of scepticism from time to time • Cynical • Hopefulness • Suspicious • Disconnected • Concern • Disappointed • Frustration • Confusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undervalued – disposable – recognition of expertise • Frustration – disconnect between what is said and what is done • Confusion – so many different issues – different impacts – complexity of roles • Difference/Concerns for Colleagues – great things happen in many workplaces • Petty, manipulative, astonished at

	<p>the misconceptions and misunderstandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear/hurt – perception so far away from our reality – disbelief
--	---

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

CBE	Staff Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish common goals and common understanding • Identify big picture issues • Joint responsibility • Consistent communication re messages taken out • Separate the relationship and the bargaining process • “Clean up” language that offends people • Establish common language • Need focus on what the real issues are...joint agreement/understanding • Clarify and understand and accept differing accountabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine approach to use when issues arise – solve before it gets to grievance • Together – determine where/when Staff Association should be involved • Need common understanding of issues and solutions • Understanding the <u>implications</u> of the collective agreement – school/principals – members • Examine the resource allocation model and determine the impacts on support staff • Taking the issues and making them – measurable, concrete, giving them validation *Find SOLUTIONS • Orientation Process – staff – <u>all</u>, what CBE does, expectations/roles/structure • Education – relationship, collective agreement Staff Association to members Senior Administration to other staff i.e. principals Working (sensitivity) on terminology i.e. CIS website – students, parents, educators and other staff • Do what you say you are going to do – consistency throughout • Greater involvement of Staff Association in decision-making, problem-solving, organizational aspects • Believe – opportunity for change

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment – don't be cynical, be realistic, be optimistic, message to members/others
--	---

7) **Priorities and Quick-Wins**

Bargaining process is being kept out of this process. We need to brainstorm 2 or 3 items that we can action.

What did we hear in common? The Working Relationship document was written in 1998-1999 and however important the commitment was, we work in a different context now. The Working Relations document needs to be reviewed because we have different circumstances now and we need to question if it will work under the governing model of the Board.

I hear that there still is not a clear understanding of what the issues are – globally. We need to clearly identify what the relationship issues are to move forward. Can this be taken away or should the Task Force be tasked with it but delegate some of the work to be done outside this group.

Trust is established through action and so we have to do something. The Mediator recommended that the issues outstanding are – salary administration, job postings, job evaluation, hours of work, layoff and recall. The one that would give this group the most creditability for all of our members is the 10 month pay over 12 months. This has been a real stumbling block in the relationship and is not part of the collective agreement. It is not part of any of the clauses although it was brought up in bargaining and it is not a contractual issue. Payment of salaries is very specific – who are the people who should be talking about this – Bill Flookes and Joel Benjamin were recommended. The question should be addressed to Bill and Joel and ask them to bring back to the Task Force their research on possibilities, solutions and options to this issue.

We cannot have a process without any content. What are our deliverabilities?

- 1) report to the Chief Superintendent by Dec. 15
- 2) recommend strategies to address the issues
- 3) filters to reconsider issues
- 4) address specific issues
- 5) take one of the issues and doing it quickly so we can get people on side and allay some cynicism

SA proposed, during collective bargaining, that staff be paid vacation pay on each paycheque instead of two lump sums, one at Christmas and the end of June. If paid on every paycheque it becomes pensionable. Connected to that, they had been using vacation pay to cover those periods when they were not working and when they get it on bi-weekly paycheques, the 10 month over 12 month spreads their money out over the

year. How this affects EI is another question? A portion of this proposal was agreed to in the most recent round of collective bargaining (i.e. vacation pay will be reflected on each paycheque).

The issue of spreading all salary and vacation pay over 12 months was not agreed to. The outstanding proposal would allow a choice and once made, that choice cannot be changed. In 2001 it was suppose to have been done but wasn't and this is the relationship piece – “a promise not fulfilled”. The issue isn't so much salary administration, it is someone said it would happen but didn't. Vacation pay has been initiated but not the implementation of the 10 month over 12 month. If that is implemented, the Staff Association is concerned that members are going to have lower salaries and do not understand that the bigger cheques right now includes the vacation pay. Has Staff Association's negotiating team effectively informed its members? One has happened without the other. The voluntary aspect is critical in that every Staff Association member understands it. Additional bank accounts access are available for employees to choose how to deposit their paycheques.

CBE member pointed out that in the current collective agreement you have an option to bank (17%) each month in a separate account. How is that different in paying over 12 months? One is a process that is not perceived demeaning and the other isn't. It would cost the board one-half million dollars to implement and reprogram PeopleSoft. When the promise was made many years ago, it was a different computer environment (Stargarden vs. PeopleSoft). The comment from the employer was not intended to demean people. The proposal of two bank accounts enabled individuals to cash flow 10 months of salary over 12 months.

Two ways to ask this question, is this possible or are there other ways to make it work? Do the people looking for opportunities understand? Can it be done?

The question to be sent to Joel and Bill for research is?

“What opportunities or possibilities within the context of 2008 are available to provide for the 10 month support staff members with an optional consistent payment of salary over 12 months? What are the operational implications for these options?”

8) Development of Purpose and Terms of Reference

Purpose:

What do we see is the purpose of this Task Force to be? Communication is the basis on establishing trust. There has always been an element of distrust. Once again, suggestion was made to make the Working Relationship document up-to-date in 2008.

9) Next Meeting Agenda

- Develop purpose and terms of reference
- Look at further specific actions and tasks within the committee and outside the committee.
- Next meeting – Thursday, October 16 from 8:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m. at Village Park Inn, Charleswood Room

10) Five things accomplished today

- Context for working together
- Focused conversation activity – theme of similarity of all
- Agreed that Joel and Bill will do some research on question proposed around 10 month pay over 12 months
- Suggestion around the working relationship commitment be revamped under current context
- Talked about looking at the processes around how we work on the grievance piece and problem-solving piece.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.