

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality
National Issue Forum
*From Planning to Action: Effectively Using Your
Professional Development Resources*

Session II: Technical Assistance Workshop
Using Interest-Based Bargaining to Support
Teacher and Leadership Quality Reform Initiatives

- *What is interest-based bargaining, and how would it be useful to a regional comprehensive center or state education agency?*
- *What are the goals and outcomes of the interest-based bargaining workshop?*

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality¹ will offer a technical assistance workshop at its 2008 March Issue Forum on the topic of interest-based bargaining. Interest-based bargaining is a strategy primarily employed by local districts and teacher unions; however, regional comprehensive centers (RCCs) and state education agencies (SEAs) are in a unique position to encourage and facilitate the use of interest-based bargaining by local districts in which labor negotiations or relationships prevent the development of effective strategies for improving teacher quality.

Interest-based bargaining is a tool or “means to an end” for two groups to successfully collaborate and generate creative solutions to difficult problems. Interest-based bargaining is designed to shift district leaders and educators away from talking about their positions and encourage negotiations and discussions based on interests. The two sides identify a shared goal that guides their collaboration—in this case, enhanced teacher and leadership quality for improved student achievement. Interest-based bargaining can be used as a tool for addressing general reform initiatives, reaching agreement on salaries and benefits, or general planning.

Regional comprehensive centers are charged with building the capacity of their states. States and their local school districts are accountable for meeting a variety of goals related to high-quality teachers and leaders in their schools and classrooms. Creative solutions, sometimes generated via strategies such as interest-based bargaining, are necessary to meet these goals. To understand the role of interest-based bargaining in addressing teacher quality issues, states should consider how labor negotiations and relationships potentially affect progress in addressing overall teacher quality as illustrated in the following examples:

- Failed contract negotiations between districts and teacher unions can stall teacher quality efforts.

¹ National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality collaborators on this work include the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) and Dr. George Ann Rice, Retired Associate Superintendent of the Clark County School District.

- A contentious relationship can prevent districts from engaging teachers in the design and implementation of teacher quality strategies.

These examples show how district-teacher union relationships can affect whether districts address teacher quality issues and whether districts develop strategies with the input and support of teachers. The interest-based bargaining process offers districts a new approach to contract negotiations: contracts become an instrument for addressing teacher quality rather than an obstacle to improving it.

Goals

Building the capacity of regional comprehensive centers and states to do the following:

- Identify situations in which interest-based bargaining may be appropriate, and effectively advocate for its use.
- Initiate and support the use of interest-based bargaining with the necessary stakeholders.
- Access interest-based bargaining tools and resources for improving teacher and leadership quality systems.

Outcomes

There are two primary intended outcomes for this workshop:

- Participants will understand the interest-based bargaining process.
- Participants will plan for how they can promote and support the interest-based bargaining process in their respective areas where it may be needed.

Workshop Presenters

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