

75-4332. Memoranda of agreement; procedure in case of impasse; fact-finding board; hearing; costs; confidentiality. (a) Public employers may include in memoranda of agreement concluded with recognized employee organizations a provision setting forth the procedures to be invoked in the event of disputes which reach an impasse in the course of meet and confer proceedings. Such memorandum shall define conditions under which an impasse exists, and if the employer is bound by the budget law set forth in K.S.A. 79-2925 et seq., and amendments thereto, the memorandum shall provide that an impasse is deemed to exist if the parties fail to achieve agreement at least 14 days prior to budget submission date.

(b) In the absence of such memorandum of procedures, or upon the failure of such procedures resulting in an impasse, either party may request the assistance of the public employee relations board, or the board may render such assistance on its own motion. In either event, if the board determines an impasse exists in meet and confer proceedings between a public employer and a recognized employee organization, the board shall aid the parties in effecting a voluntary resolution of the dispute, and request the appointment of a mediator or mediators, representative of the public, from a list of qualified persons maintained by the secretary of labor, and such appointment of a mediator or mediators shall be made forthwith by the secretary.

(c) All verbal or written information transmitted between any party to a dispute and a mediator conducting the proceeding, or the staff of an approved program under K.S.A. 5-501 et seq., and amendments thereto, shall be confidential communications. No admission, representation or statement made in the proceeding shall be admissible as evidence or subject to discovery. A mediator shall not be subject to process requiring the disclosure of any matter discussed during the proceedings unless all the parties consent to a waiver. Any party, including the neutral person or staff of an approved program conducting the proceeding, participating in the proceeding has a privilege in any action to refuse to disclose, and to prevent a witness from disclosing, any communication made in the course of the proceeding. The privilege may be claimed by the party or anyone the party authorizes to claim the privilege.

(d) The confidentiality and privilege requirements of this section shall not apply to:

(1) Information that is reasonably necessary to establish a defense for the mediator or staff of an approved program conducting the proceeding in the case of an action against the mediator or staff of an approved program that is filed by a party to the mediation;

(2) any information that the mediator is required to report under K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 38-2223, and amendments thereto;

(3) any information that is reasonably necessary to stop the commission of an ongoing crime or fraud or to prevent the commission of a crime or fraud in the future for which there was an expressed intent to commit such crime or fraud; or

(4) any information that the mediator is required to report or communicate under the specific provisions of any statute or in order to comply with orders of the court.

(e) If the impasse persists seven days after the mediators have been appointed, the board shall request the appointment of a fact-finding board of not more than three members, each representative of the public, from a list of qualified persons maintained by the secretary of labor. The fact-finding board shall conduct a hearing, may administer oaths, and may request the board to issue subpoenas. It shall make written findings of facts and recommendations for resolution of the dispute and, not later than 21 days from the day of appointment, shall serve such findings on the public employer and the recognized employee organization. The board may make this report public seven days after it is submitted to the parties. If the dispute continues 14 days after the report is submitted to the parties, the report shall be made public.

(f) If the parties have not resolved the impasse by the end of a 40-day period, commencing with the appointment of the fact-finding board, or by a date not later than 14 days prior to the budget submission date, whichever date occurs first: (1) The representative of the public employer involved shall submit to the governing body of the public employer involved a copy of the findings of fact and recommendations of the fact-finding board, together with the representative's recommendations for settling the dispute; (2) the employee organization may submit to such governing body its recommendations for settling the dispute; (3) the governing body or a duly authorized committee thereof shall forthwith conduct a hearing at which the parties shall be required to explain their positions; and (4) thereafter, the governing body shall take such action as it deems to be in the public interest, including the interest of the public employees involved. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable to the state and its agencies and employees.

(g) The cost for the fees of court reporters and fact finders provided by the secretary of labor upon the request of the board shall be borne equally by the parties to a dispute.

History: L. 1971, ch. 264, § 12; L. 1976, ch. 370, § 101; L. 1996, ch. 129, § 7; L. 2004, ch. 179, § 120; L. 2006, ch. 200, § 116; L. 2013, ch. 61, § 2; July 1.