Representation Policy

A Policy Purpose
This policy is intended to ensure that all WPEA represented bargaining unit members (“members”) understand the services available to them and the basis whereby WPEA provides these services.

This policy is intended to ensure that WPEA meets its representation responsibilities provided by law as an organization certified to represent bargaining units, within the resource limitations of WPEA, and to use those resources to the best benefit of all WPEA represented members.

B Representation Defined
Representation under this policy means all the resources WPEA has available to respond to represented member needs. These include facilities and equipment, communications, staff and personnel, volunteer assistance, budgeted funds and the like.

C Representation Priorities
WPEA provides representation according to these priorities, as allocated by the WPEA President:

1. Collective needs: The needs of the bargaining unit(s) as a whole (such as collective bargaining services and legislative advocacy) are WPEA’s first priority.

2. Individual needs: The needs of individual members. These include grievances, reclassifications, disciplinary issues, and discharge/termination or other cases of similar effect to the member. Such cases are given priority over other individual needs. No represented bargaining unit member is guaranteed arbitration.

3. That representation shall not be used against fellow bargaining unit members without due cause.

4. The issue(s) being meritorious and not frivolous, that relief or a remedy is available, and that a representation request was made to WPEA in a timely manner.

5. That representation in the courts will be limited to cases involving common rights and remedies.

6. That the member understands and accepts WPEA’s responsibility to determine the mode and manner of representation; agrees to honestly represent the facts and circumstances to WPEA; and agrees to cooperate and support representation efforts including any reasonable conditions established by WPEA.

D Disposition of Grievances
WPEA shall have the exclusive authority to interpret and enforce the collective bargaining agreement, including all decisions related to the disposition of grievances. WPEA members shall have the right to appeal such decisions to the WPEA Executive Board, in accordance with Article XV of the WPEA Bylaws.

E WPEA Representation Limitations
WPEA’s representation is limited to the services and remedies available under the collective bargaining agreement and unfair labor practice complaints. WPEA bargaining unit members may have statutory or common law claims separate from the collective bargaining agreement. WPEA does not represent bargaining unit members for those claims.

While WPEA may assist members and support their own representation efforts, WPEA will not direct, coordinate, or act as primary representative in these areas.

No attorney-client relationship is formed between any WPEA staff or agent, and any WPEA bargaining unit member, at any time.

F Representation Limits to Members Outside Bargaining Units
WPEA will not provide representation on individual employment matters that existed prior to or within the 30-day period following WPEA’s receipt of such person’s membership application, unless the WPEA President determines that it is within WPEA’s collective interest to do so (such as for the creation of a bargaining unit in the future).

G Disclosure and Reporting of WPEA Representation
WPEA’s policy is to maintain the confidentiality of members who request assistance from the union or who inquire about union representation. Such may be revoked or limited where necessary to establish the facts and circumstances involved, or to establish the interests of other affected members, union officers, and agents.

Such confidentiality will not be maintained and WPEA may report or disclose representation when legally required to do so.

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Washington Public Employees Association
WPEA
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