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Hot summer days and the Chicago AG are here. I've mentioned confidentiality policies that have been under review as part of the recent drama in the last couple articles. One person contacted me and asked what our policies are to help guide what could be improved. So, this month I would like to use this space to talk about governance. There are primarily three documents available on the Mensa website that provide our structure. The first is the Mensa Constitution that covers all international Mensa organizations. The second is our Bylaws, which can be amended with a vote of the members. If you made it to the ABM, you may have voted on proposed amendments that will go to the overall membership at the next election. The Bylaws include hearings requirements for member suspension but are not clear on what confidentiality is required. The third is the ASIEs, which is where most of our policies reside. An AISE is an "Action Still In Effect," which includes policies voted on by the American Mensa Committee (AMC).

Most of the policies related to confidentiality are included in ASIEs. This includes the Executive Session, which is the closed session of the AMC meeting and used to discuss legal issues, personnel matters including those concerning volunteer personnel, and disciplinary actions. When returning to open session after the completion of the executive session, motions passed and their movers/seconders are reported. That report is all that is recorded; we don't keep records or recordings of an Executive Session.

Appendices 5 and 6 outline the hearings process and associated confidentiality. The hearings process and related material and evidence are deemed confidential. The decision of the Hearings Committee is distributed to all members. The concern I'm hearing about recent events stems from that decision not including detailed information on what happened during the Executive Session. There are a couple of points to consider. First, the Hearings Committee shouldn't be asked to violate the confidentiality of the Executive Session since that's established outside of their purview. Second, even if they did, there aren't good records of what happened so it would just be a "he said-she said" interpretation of what happened.

It can get complicated, but I would love to hear your feedback or help with any questions you have. Happy Summer!

~ Curt