**Section 166.296 Ex parte Consultations**

Agency Hearing Officers and staff shall observe the requirements of Section 10+60 of the IAPA as follows:

*Neither agency members, employees nor hearing examiners shall, after notice of hearing in a contested case or licensing to which the procedures of a contested case apply under this Act, communicate, directly or indirectly, in connection with any issue of fact, with any person or party, or in connection with any other issue with any party or his representative, except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. However, an agency member may communicate with other members of the agency, and an agency member or hearing examiner may have the aid and advice of one or more personal assistants.* (Section 10-60 IAPA)