

POLICY 8650

SCHOOL BOARD ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Public office is a trust created by the confidence which the public places in the integrity of its public officers. To preserve this confidence, it is the desire of the School Board to operate under the highest ethical standards. To that end, the Board will strive to render effective and efficient service to their respective communities.

The members of the Board subscribe to the following code:

1. A Board member should honor the high responsibility which his/her membership demands:
  - a. By thinking always in terms of “children first;”
  - b. By understanding that the basic function of the Board is “policymaking” and not “administrative” and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions;
  - c. By accepting the responsibility along with his/her fellow Board members of seeing that the maximum of facilities and resources is provided for the proper functioning of schools;
  - d. By refusing to “play politics” in either the traditional partisan, or in any petty sense;
  - e. By representing at all times the entire school community;
  - f. By accepting and recognizing the responsibility as District official to seek the improvement of education throughout the school district and the state.
2. A Board member should respect his/her relationships with other members of the Board:
  - a. By recognizing that authority rests only with the Board in official meetings, and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the Board outside of such meetings, unless he/she is a Board officer carrying out duties authorized by law.
  - b. By recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work;
  - c. By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole;
  - d. By making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed;
  - e. By respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of “majority rule;”
  - f. By refusing to participate in irregular meetings which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend.
3. A Board member should meet his/her responsibility to his/her community:
  - a. By attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community;
  - b. By regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community;
  - c. By insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis;
  - d. By vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools;
  - e. By refusing to use his/her position on the Board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige;
  - f. By winning the community’s confidence that all is being done in the best interest of school children.
  - g. By being fiscally responsible to the community.

POLICY 8650  
SCHOOL BOARD ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT  
Page 2

4. A Board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff:
  - a. By acting upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel;
  - b. By following proper Board policy and procedure when dealing with complaints and discussing them only at a regular meeting in accordance with Board policy;
  - c. By presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent;
  - d. All requests for reports will be filtered through the Superintendent;
  - e. Board members should contact the Superintendent before visiting a school.
  
5. A Board member should strive to improve public education and to that end:
  - a. Remember always that his/her first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.
  - b. Honor all national, state and local laws and regulations.
  - c. Attend all regularly scheduled Board/Committee meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues considered at those meetings.
  - d. Recognize that he/she should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings.
  - e. Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
  - f. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communications between the Board, students, staff, and all elements of the community.
  - g. Seek communications between the Board and middle and high school students on a quarterly basis at the ESC.
  - h. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent.
  - i. Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.
  - j. Inform him/herself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations.
  - k. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
  - l. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using his/her Board position for personal or partisan gain.
  - m. Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable laws.

LEGAL REF.: Wisconsin Statutes

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| Sections | 19.59  | [Ethical standards for public officials]   |
|          | 119.66 | [Interest in contracts forbidden]          |
|          | 946.10 | [Bribery of public officers and employees] |
|          | 946.12 | [Misconduct in public office]              |
|          | 946.13 | [Private interests in public contracts]    |

POLICY 8650  
SCHOOL BOARD ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT  
Page 3

CROSS REF.: 8651, Board Member Conflicts of Interest

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS: None

AFFIRMED: October 10, 2000

REVISED: July 10, 2001  
April 25, 2005  
February 24, 2015