

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 Board to operate under the highest ethical standards. To that end, the Jefferson Board of Education will strive to render effective and efficient service to their respective communities.

The members of the Board subscribe to the following code:

I. A school Board member should honor the high responsibility which his/her membership demands:

- BY thinking always in terms of “children first;”
- BY understanding that the basic function of the school Board member is “policymaking” and not “administrative” and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions;
- 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;
- BY refusing to “play politics” in either the traditional partisan, or in any petty sense;
- BY representing at all times the entire school community;
- BY accepting and recognizing the responsibility as a State official to seek the improvement of education throughout the State.

II. A school Board member should respect his/her relationships with other members of the Board:

- 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;
- BY recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work;
- 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;
- BY making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed;
- BY respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of “majority rule;”
- BY refusing to participate in irregular meetings which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend.

III. A school Board member should meet his/her responsibility to his/her community:

- BY attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community;
- BY regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community;
- BY insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis;
- BY vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools;
- BY refusing to use his/her position on a school Board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige;
- BY winning the community’s confidence that all is being done in the best interest of school children;

IV. A school Board member should maintain desirable relations with the superintendent or his/her staff:

- BY acting upon the recommendation of the superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel;
- BY following proper Board policy procedure when dealing with complaints and discussing them only at a regular meeting in accordance with Board policy;
- BY presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the superintendent;

V. As a member of my local Board of Education, I will strive to improve public education and to that end I will:

- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.
- Honor all national, state and local laws and regulations.
- Attend all regularly scheduled Board/Committee meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues considered at those meetings.
- Recognize that I should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings.
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
- Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent.
- Communicate to other Board members and the superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.
- Inform myself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state and national school boards associations.
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain.
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable laws.

ADOPTED: February 26, 2001

LEGAL REF.: Wisconsin Statutes: 19.59

CROSS REF.:	AD – Educational Philosophy	BA – Board Operational Goals
	BBA – School Board Powers and Duties	BBAA – Board Member Authority
	BCD – Board-Superintendent Relations	BDDE – Rules of Order
	BDDH – Public Participation at Board Meetings	KLA – Complaint Policy

REVIEW DATE: October 24, 2011

SELF-EVALUATION SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Am I/are we a student advocate? What can others observe that indicates I am/we are?
2. Do I/we assure opportunity is provided for high quality education for every student in our community?
3. Do I/we observe state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to education?
4. Do I/we encourage the open-minded exchange of ideas and opinions in a conscientious, courteous manner?
5. Do I/we vote my/our honest convictions, thereafter abiding by and supporting the majority decision of the board?
6. Do I/we promote the presentation of controversial issues in a fair and unbiased manner?
7. Do I/we build relationships through open, direct communication?
8. Do I/we maintain confidentiality of privileged information?
9. Do I/we refer complaints through proper channels within the system?
10. Do I/we welcome and encourage active citizen participation on school committees?
11. Do I/we model integrity in all matters?
12. Do I/we establish and maintain a positive reputation in all I/we do?
13. Do I/we represent the entire community and base decisions on available facts?
14. Do I/we delegate authority to the district administrator and ensure that the district is guided through effective policies?
15. Do I/we help the community understand the importance of support for public education?