

# Code of Conduct for Members of School Boards

As a member of my local school board, I will do my utmost to represent the public interest in education by adhering to the following standards and principles:

1. I will represent all school district constituents honestly and equally and refuse to surrender my responsibilities to special interest or partisan political groups.
2. I will avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety which could result from my position, and will not use my board membership for personal gain or publicity.
3. I will recognize that a board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a board meeting.
4. I will take no private action that might compromise the board or administration and will respect the confidentiality of privileged information.
5. I will abide by majority decisions of the board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.
6. I will encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow board members and will participate in board discussions in an open, honest and respectful manner, honoring differences of opinion or perspective.
7. I will prepare for, attend and actively participate in school board meetings.
8. I will be sufficiently informed about and prepared to act on the specific issues before the board, and remain reasonably knowledgeable about local, state, national, and global education issues.
9. I will respectfully listen to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community.
10. I will strive for a positive working relationship with the superintendent, respecting the superintendent's authority to advise the board, implement board policy, and administer the district.
11. I will model continuous learning and work to ensure good governance by taking advantage of board member development opportunities, such as those sponsored by my state and national school board associations, and encourage my fellow board members to do the same.
12. I will strive to keep my board focused on its primary work of clarifying the district purpose, direction and goals, and monitoring district performance.



## BOARD AGREEMENTS

**The Board, its individual Members, and the Superintendent, commit individually and collectively to stand by these Agreements:**

### **1. RELATIONSHIPS**

- Board Members and the Superintendent recognize that a relationship which encompasses mutual trust, support, and cooperation is essential to the smooth and effective operation of the District. As Board Members and Superintendent, we will exhibit positive behaviors, including striving to see the strengths, talents, and expertise in each other; recognizing and acknowledging the positive contributions of each other; seeking positive strategies for problem solving; and practicing open and honest communication with each other.
- Board Members and the Superintendent will encourage the expression of diverse opinions by individual Board Members giving full consideration to differing points of view. Board Members and the Superintendent have an obligation to express their opinions and respect others' opinions.
- Board Members and the Superintendent reaffirm a "no surprises" approach to business—during or between meetings—as a sign of respect for all participants and the process.
- Board Members and the Superintendent recognize that the Board sets policy for the District, with input and upon recommendations of the Superintendent and staff, and the Superintendent and staff implement the policy.
- Board Members and the Superintendent will make judgments based on objective information, not on perceived motives.

### **2. SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE**

- Board Members and the Superintendent will use language in discussions that articulate and reinforce commitment to our Equity and Excellence Statement, our Goals, and our Policy.
- Board Members have the right to disagree with the decision of the Board but will support the Board in its decision by abiding by the will of the majority as reflected in the Board's decision, and refrain from undermining the Board's decision except through legal, ethical, and constructive channels.
- No individual Board Member other than the Board President, per Board policy, has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board without the consent of the Board.
- When the Board President initiates contact with legal counsel on matters of significance to the district, the Board President will notify the Board. When there is an interest, board members should ask the Board President or the Superintendent to seek legal counsel. The Board President will notify all other Board Members of the Member's request.



## BOARD AGREEMENTS

### 3. OFFICER ELECTIONS/ROLE

- Board Members who are interested in running for the office of Board President and/or Vice-President will, two weeks prior to the election, submit to the Board Secretary who will circulate to the full Board, a statement of intent. The statement should include a brief explanation of why the Member is interested in becoming Board President or Vice-President.
- The Board President will periodically check in with individual Board Members and Board Members should also reach out to the President with questions, comments, or concerns.
- The Board President will strive to keep the Board informed of information of interest to the Board, including professional development opportunities.

### 4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Board Members will attend Board meetings and committee meetings as assigned, work with partners on reporting out on committee assignments, and inform the Board President if Board meetings will be missed, preferably in advance.
- Individual Board Members will comply with State requirements on mandatory training, including reporting obligations, and strive to work on professional development beyond the State-required minimum.
- The Board will participate in a Board self-evaluation at least once per year. The Board will participate in a shorter self-evaluation session after the election of new Board Members.

### 5. MEETING AGENDAS

Board Members who wish to have an item placed on an upcoming Board meeting agenda will contact the Board President and may also copy other Board Members and the Superintendent. After this notice, Board Members can also bring agenda items up during new business. This agreement does not preclude Members from raising ideas about items for future discussion during Board meetings.



## BOARD AGREEMENTS

### **6. EFFICIENCY IN MEETINGS**

- Whenever possible, Board Members will contact the Superintendent or Chief Financial Officer and copy the President with questions on the agenda prior to the Board meeting. Board Members continue to have a right to ask the question(s) at the meeting as well.
- Board Members will limit their discussion to work that is Board work, and not stray into staff work or micromanage.
- At the direction of the Superintendent, staff will connect presentations to the Board, whether for information or action, to the goals of the District and avoid topics that are not Board work.
- Board Members will stay on topic, prioritize remarks, strive to avoid duplicative comments, and state whether their remarks will be in the form of a comment or question.
- Board Members will be recognized by the Board President before speaking.
- All Board Members should have an opportunity to speak before a Board Member may speak again.
- Each information agenda item will have a suggested time allotment.

### **7. COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY**

- Board Members will refer complaints to the Superintendent and respect the chain of command.
- The Board President will respond to email from the public and copy all Board Members, who may reply in their individual capacity and not as spokesperson for the Board.
- In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Board Members will not “reply to all” to any District email or text messages.

### **8. PRESS**

The Board President is the spokesperson for the Board; the Superintendent is the spokesperson for the District.