Article 8 **INTERNAL BOARD POLICIES** Policy No. 8272

# Internal Board Policies - Board Members

**8272 Code of Conduct**

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring the public, staff, and students that school board members will govern through policy. In accordance with this belief and by adoption of this policy, each board member commits to following the Code of Conduct.

We will listen to each opinion, and act as a board. We will speak candidly and courteously to each other and listen to dissenting or different viewpoints with an open mind. We will help each other to focus our discussion on the issue not an individual. Once the board has collectively arrived at a decision, we will each support the will of the board.

The board president (or designee) will speak as the official voice of the board. A single board member will not represent the board without the consent of the board, and board members making personal statements (in any format, including speeches, articles, social media posts, etc.) should clearly state these statements are their opinion and not the position of the board.

We will be mindful of the different roles and responsibilities throughout the school district and maintain a focus on policy and governance.

We will be aware of the different roles that we play as individuals (board member, patron, parent, etc.).

**As a Board Member**

* I will listen.
* I will be honest.
* I will respect the majority decision of the board.
* I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.
* I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies.
* I will keep confidential information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the district if disclosed.
* I will focus my attention on fulfilling the board’s responsibility of goal setting, policy, and evaluation.
* I will diligently prepare for and attend board meetings.
* I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.
* I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students in the district.
* I will respect the opinion of others.
* I will recognize the integrity of my predecessors and the merit of their work.
* I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to other’s ideas.
* I will be motivated only by an earnest desire to serve the school district and the students in the best possible way.

I will not use the school district or any part of the school district program for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends or supporters.

* I will vote for a closed session of the board if the situation requires it, but I will consider “secret” sessions of board members unethical.
* I will recognize that to promise in advance of a meeting how I will vote on any proposition which is to be considered is to close my mind and agree not to think through other facts and points of view which may be presented in the meeting.
* I will expect, in board meetings, to spend more time on education programs and procedures than on business details.
* I will recognize that authority rests with the board in legal session and not with individual members of the board, except as authorized by law.
* I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the board meeting, about other members of the board or their opinions.
* I will express my honest and most thoughtful opinions in a professional manner during board meetings in an effort to have decisions made for the best interest of the students and the education program.
* I will abide by majority decisions of the board.
* I will carefully consider petitions, resolutions, and complaints and will act in the best interest of the school district.
* I will not discuss the confidential business of the board.
* I will endeavor to keep informed on local, state, and national educational developments of significance.
* I will be accountable to the public by representing district policies, programs, priorities and progress accurately.
* I will make no personal promise to take private action that may compromise my performance of my responsibilities.

**Board Governance**

* Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings, insofar as possible, and review advance materials provided.
* Respect the confidentiality of privileged information and make no individual decisions or commitments that would compromise the board or administration.
* Work with other board members to establish effective board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent.
* Maintain a priority board focus on policymaking, goal setting, planning process, and evaluation. Most importantly increasing student learning and achievement and ensuring efficient use of education resources.
* Comply with Board policy, all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and guidance from the superintendent, when making board decisions.
* Encourage individual board member expression of opinion and establish an open, two-way communication process between the board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
* Remain current with changing needs and requirements pertaining to educational issues through individual study and by participating in board learning opportunities such as those sponsored by the NASB, the Nebraska Department of Education, etc.
* Recognize that a board member’s responsibility, together with fellow board members, is to ensure the school district provides a quality education for all students.
* In consultation with the superintendent and district administrators, set education goals for the school(s).
* Maintain confidentiality of information and discussion conducted in closed session.
* Review essential facts, consider others’ ideas, and then present personal opinions during board deliberations but, once the board vote has been taken, support board decisions regardless of how individuals voted.
* Act only as a member of the board and do not assume any individual authority when the board is not in session, unless otherwise directed by the board.
* Rely on school policies that are continually updated and aligned with Nebraska and federal education laws, and guidance from the superintendent, when making board decisions.
* Request recommendations from the superintendent and the board may seek legal counsel, when required for full and informed board consideration of issues requiring legal expertise.
* Expect an equitable amount of board meeting time be spent both learning about educational programs and conducting the business of the board.
* Maintain a priority board focus on increasing student learning and ensuring efficient use of education resources.
* Retain independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
* Voice opinions respectfully and maintain good relations with other board members, administrators, school staff, and members of the public.
* Be informed about educational issues through individual study and by participating in board development opportunities
* Support new school board members by sharing your experience and knowledge.
* Ensure that adequate board orientation and team building opportunities are available for board members and administrators.
* Associate with board members from other school districts to discuss school challenges and collaborate on school improvement initiatives.

**Board – Superintendent Relations**

* Respect that the superintendent of schools and his or her staff are responsible and accountable for the delivery of the educational programs and the conduct of school operations.

Ensure strong management of the school system by hiring, setting goals with and evaluating the superintendent.

* Provide policy support for school administrators in the performance of their duties and delegate authority commensurate with those responsibilities.
* Expect the superintendent to keep the board adequately informed through regular written and oral communications.
* Refer complaints, requests, and concerns to the superintendent.
* Avoid making commitments that may compromise the decision-making ability of the board or administrators.
* Maintain open and candid communication with the superintendent.
* Hold the superintendent accountable by jointly creating job performance standards and at least annually performing a comprehensive evaluation process based on the job description, contract, and identified performance standards.
* Recognize that a board member’s responsibility is to see that schools are well run, but not to run them.

**Personnel Relations**

* Seek to employ the most qualified school staff and insist on regular, impartial employee evaluations.
* Hire no superintendent, principal, or teacher already under contract with another school district unless the person has formally been released from his or her contract.
* Individual board members shall not give directives to any school administrator or employee, publicly or privately.
* While Board members need to be well-informed of District operations, events, and personnel; Board members must not be disruptive nor an inconvenience to building operations. Neither shall they interfere with the normal flow or function of each building. With that in mind, it is important that any meetings or official visits to any District building be arranged in advance and an appointment scheduled for such official meetings. In addition, the BoE President shall be notified of any such meeting. The purpose of this communication is to ensure the Board President is aware of the subject or purpose of any meeting of any Board member to ensure the BoE is not caught unaware of any perceived obligation or promise being made to any administrator or employee that may not conform with Board policy or established protocols. This does not mean that chance meetings between staff or administrators and Board members cannot take place. It is simply meant to prevent delaying or interrupting staff or administrators’ workflow, or other duties being conducted when a Board member wishes to conduct a surprise or unscheduled meeting.

**Community Relations**

* Perform a liaison communications role by respecting the needs of both the community and the school.
* Consider the needs of the entire community and vote for what is best for students.
* Encourage collaboration between the school and community.
* Request that periodic surveys be conducted with the community to assess the quality of education services and use the data to establish and monitor goals.

**Conflict of Interest**

* Do not solicit or receive directly or indirectly any gift or compensation in return for making a recommendation or casting a vote.
* Do not receive anything of value by contract or otherwise, from the school district you serve unless it is received:

o as a result of a contract accepted after a public bid. o in public recognition of service or achievement.

o as expenses allowed by law for official duties performed as a member of such board.

Follow the school board conflict of interest policy regarding the appearance of conflict of interest.

* Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using the board member position on the board for personal or political gain.

To ensure board members adhere to the Code of Conduct, several measures can be implemented:

1. Annual review and signing: Require board members to review and sign the Code of Conduct annually, affirming their commitment to its principles.
2. Orientation and training: Provide comprehensive orientation for new board members and ongoing training for all members to reinforce the importance of the Code.
3. Peer accountability: Encourage board members to hold each other accountable by speaking candidly yet courteously about any observed violations.
4. Public transparency: Make the Code of Conduct publicly available and regularly communicate the board's commitment to these standards.
5. Consequences for violations: Establish clear consequences for Code violations, such as censure or other board-approved disciplinary actions.
6. Regular self-evaluation: Conduct periodic board self-assessments to identify areas of improvement in adhering to the Code.
7. Community feedback: Implement regular community surveys to gauge public perception of the board's adherence to ethical standards.
8. Leadership example: Ensure the board president and other leaders consistently model the behavior outlined in the Code.

Adopted: June 13, 2005

Reviewed: July 10, 2006, June 9, 2008, June 8, 2009, June 14, 2010, June 13, 2011, Jan. 9, 2012, Mar. 11, 2013, Mar. 10, 2014, Mar. 9, 2015, Mar. 14, 2016, Mar. 13, 2017, Apr. 9, 2018, June 10, 2019, April 13, 2020, April 12, 2021, April 11, 2022, April 10, 2023, April 8, 2024

Revised: Jan. 13, 2025

Reviewed: April 14, 2025