

**TITLE: Code of Ethics for School Board Members/School Administrators    CODE: BBF**

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A school board member has no legal powers or authority unless acting at a school board meeting or acting for the school board after it formally grants power to act on its behalf. A school board member should perform the duties of a school board member in a manner consistent with this Code of Ethics.

Creating a working relationship of trust and respect is at the heart of this professional covenant developed between the board, administration, staff and the public. Board members can demonstrate their personal commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics by signing this document signifying that they agree to uphold the principles, both, in letter and spirit.

Board Governance

1. Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings, insofar as possible, and review study materials about the issues to be considered on each agenda.
2. Set goals for the school system and establish policies to direct its administration.
3. Maintain confidentiality of discussion conducted in executive session and of other privileged information.
4. Abide by board decisions regardless of how individuals voted.
5. Act only as a member of the board and do not assume authority as an individual in school matters when the board is not in session.
6. Be familiar with and observe Vermont education laws.
7. Listen to legal counsel and constructive criticism to protect the board and the school system from liability.

Board-Administration Relations

1. Give school administrators authority commensurate with their responsibility work through the properly appointed school officials according to the school system's organization and policies, and support school administrators in the performance of their duties.
2. Expect the superintendent to keep the board adequately informed through regular written or oral reports and hold the superintendent accountable through an annual job performance evaluation.
3. Refer complaints, requests, and concerns to the superintendent or other appropriate staff member.
4. Use the chain of command and avoid making commitments or promises that compromise the board, administration or the school system.
5. Listen to the recommendations of the superintendent and staff before making decisions and provide ongoing feedback to the superintendent.
6. Recognize that a board member's responsibility is to see that schools are well run, but not to run them.

Board Member Relations

1. Retain independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
2. Voice opinions responsibly, maintain good relations with other board members, respect other board members' rights and opinions, and make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the board meeting, about other board members or school staff. Instead, express opinions in a professional, fair manner.
3. Accept the responsibility to secure facts before arriving at conclusions.

4. Expect more time to be spent learning about educational programs and procedures than on business details at board meetings.

#### Personnel Relations

1. Support employment of the best qualified school staff and insist on regular, impartial employee evaluations.
2. Hire no superintendent, principal or teacher already under contract with another school unless assurance is first secured from the proper authority that the person can be released from contract.

#### Community Relations

1. Represent the entire community and vote for what seems best for the children of the school system.
2. Interpret the attitudes, wishes and needs of the community to school administrators and communicate the aims, methods and goals of the schools to the community.
3. Create an environment that fosters community participation and involvement.

#### Conflict of Interest

1. Refrain from using board membership for political, personal or business advancement.
2. Recognize conflicts of interest and avoid being placed in a position or perceived conflict of interest in hiring, letting bids, approving contracts and other financial affairs of the school system.

#### Board Preparation and Training

1. Be informed about educational issues by individual study and through participating in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the Vermont and National School Boards Associations.
2. Take advantage of opportunities to improve your knowledge and to build your skills as locally elected members of school governing boards.
3. Associate with board members from other schools to discuss school problems and cooperate in the improvement of public school conditions.
4. Provide assistance to new school board members and make sure adequate orientation and training opportunities are offered them.

#### Progressive Consequences for Failure to Follows the Code of Ethics:

1. Board chair and superintendent informally meet in private with offending board member to discuss alleged Code of Ethics violation.
  2. Board reprimand offending board member in executive session [A disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer...1VSA, 313(4)].
  3. Publicly censure (reprimand) offending board member at a warned board meeting and reflect action in meeting minutes [Robert's Rules of Order].
  4. Board announce position in opposition to offending board member's action(s) at warned board meeting, reflect board position in meeting minutes, and directly communicate board position to news media that the offending board member's statements/actions are not supported by the board.
  5. Board officially request offending board member's resignation [however, the board has no authority to enforce this action].
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I agree to abide by the principles outlined in the School Board Code of Ethics and will do everything in my power to work as a productive member of the leadership team.

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Board member

Board member

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Board member

Board member

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Board member

Principal

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Superintendent

Principal

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Date

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1st Reading: January 5, 2005  
2nd Reading: February 2, 2005  
Date Adopted: