

POLICY

2000-19

BOARD OF TRUSTEES - BOARD ETHICS

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The Westfield Washington Schools Board of Trustees adopts the following Code of Ethics recommended by the Indiana School Boards Association:

A School Board member should honor the high responsibility which his/her membership demands by:

1. Thinking always in terms of "children first;"
2. Understanding that the basic function of the School Board member is "policy-making" and not "administrative," and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions;
3. 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;
4. Refusing to "play politics" in either the traditional partisan, or in any petty sense;
5. Representing at all times the entire school community;
6. Accepting the responsibility of becoming well informed concerning the duties of Board members, and the proper functions of public schools;
7. Recognizing responsibility as a State official to seek the improvement of education throughout the State.

A School Board member should respect his/her relationships with other members of the Board by:

1. 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;
2. Recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessor and associates and the merit of their work;
3. Refusing to make statements or promises as to how s/he will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole;
4. Making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed;
5. Respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of "majority rule;"
6. Refusing to participate in irregular meetings such as "secret" or "star chamber" meetings, which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend;

7. Attempting to fairly appraise both the present and future educational needs of the community.

A School Board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent and his/her staff by:

1. Striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post;
2. Giving the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties, and also by holding him/her responsible for acceptable results;
3. Acting only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel;
4. Having the Superintendent present at all meetings of the Board except when his/her contract and salary are under consideration;
5. Referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them only at a regular meeting after failure of administrative solution;
6. Striving to provide adequate safeguards around the Superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can live happily and comfortably in the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis;
7. Presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent.

A School Board member should meet his/her responsibilities to his/her community by:

1. Attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community;
2. Regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools of the community;
3. Insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis;
4. Vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools;
5. Refusing to use his/her position on a School Board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige;
6. Refusing to discuss personnel matters or any other confidential business of the Board in his/her home, on the street, or in his/her office;
7. Winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.