

School Board Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities

Under the Laws of South Dakota, the School Board acts as the governing body of the public schools with full powers of direction and control. The Board derives its authority from the State Legislature and will function within the framework of State and Federal Laws and Regulations, court decisions, and Attorney General opinions.

Recognizing the authority of the State, the Board considers the following its general functions:

1. To select and employ a Superintendent of Schools and support him in the discharge of his responsibilities.
2. To formulate and enact policy and to delegate the application of policies to the Superintendent and his staff, who will be held responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the entire school system.
3. To provide for the planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction, and maintenance of the physical plant of the school system.
4. To establish and maintain records, accounts, archives, management methods, and procedures incidental to the conduct of school business.
5. To approve the budget, financial reports, audits, major expenditures, payment of obligations, and policies that enable the administration to formulate regulations and other guides for the orderly accomplishment of business.
6. To estimate and levy taxes for the operation, support, maintenance, improvement, and extension of the school system.
7. To adopt courses of study and provide instructional materials.
8. To employ support and certificated personnel to carry out school programs and provide fair and equitable compensation.
9. To evaluate the educational program to determine the effectiveness with which the schools are achieving the educational purpose of the school system.
10. To provide for the dissemination of school district information to the public and maintain open lines of communication with the community.

Responsibilities of the School Board

The school exists for the child. The Board shall attempt to harmonize all relationships between the home and the school.

School Board members are elected to be representatives of the community, acting under the authority of the State. It is their duty to foster and protect the welfare of the community through the school. The Board members shall acquaint themselves with the school and use their influence to create public opinion favorable to educational policies.

The Board will conduct its business in open session at legally called and advertised meetings. The public is invited and welcome to attend all Board meetings. Affairs which, according to South Dakota Law, are appropriately discussed out of the public eye, will be discussed in executive session, however any action resulting from that discussion will be taken in open session.

Each Board member is expected to:

1. Take his/her responsibility seriously;
2. Spend school funds wisely and make a financial report of such disbursements;
3. Regard him/herself as a representative of the people and respect their interest;
4. Be broad minded and impartial;
5. Subordinate personal interests;
6. Adhere to the policy making and legislative functions of the Board;
7. Accept and support majority decisions of the Board;
8. Identify self with Board policies and actions;

9. Refuse to speak for or act on school matters unless in a legally constituted meeting of the Board;
10. Suspend judgment until the facts are available;
11. Make use of pertinent experience;
12. Help identify problems;
13. Devote the time outside of Board meetings as Board business may require;
14. Be willing to accept ideas from others;
15. Have enthusiastic interest in the welfare of the children;
16. Understand the desirability of delegating administrative responsibility;
17. Support the executive officer in his/her authorized functions;
18. Encourage teamwork between the Executive Officer and the Board;
19. Recognize problems and conditions that are of executive concern;
20. Have the ability to speak effectively in public;
21. Believe firmly in democratic processes and in the right of all groups to be heard;
22. Assist others in working effectively;
23. Be willing to work with fellow Board members in spite of personality differences;
24. Display both tact and firmness in relationships with individuals;
25. Treat patrons and teachers fairly and ethically;
26. Foster harmonious relationships;
27. Be able to weather criticism;
28. Maintain firm convictions;
29. Share responsibilities for Board decisions;
30. Listen attentively to all requests and suggestions and refer them to either the Superintendent or to other Board members;
31. Keep him/herself informed so that he/she can give intelligent answers when citizens of the community ask him/her questions relative to the actions of the Board.

Legal References: SDCL 13-8-1; 13-8-39; 13-10-2; Title 13

Adopted: July 2000; June 2001

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