

Policy #: 209
Title: MSA BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT
Date of Initial Approval: 04-25-2019
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 09-29-2021
Reviewers: MSA Board Policy Committee

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist each Minnesota State Academies (MSA) board member in understanding their role as part of a board and in recognizing the contribution that each member must make to develop an effective and responsible board. All MSA board members are required to maintain a high standard of ethics in performing public service as a member of the MSA board. This includes, but is not limited to, abiding by the intent of the Open Meeting law; operating within board policy and procedures; honest representation of appropriate reimbursable expenses and per diems; and preparation for and attendance at meetings. Each board member is expected to participate in board meetings, fulfilling the mission of the Minnesota State Academies.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Each MSA board member shall follow the code of conduct as follows in this policy. All members shall sign the MSA Board Member Oath of Office and the MSA Board Code of Conduct when appointed to the board. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed and re-signed by all board members at the annual organizational meeting in June. (*Appendix 209A – MSA Board Member Oath of Office; Appendix 209B – MSA Board Code of Conduct*)

III. AS A MEMBER OF THE MSA BOARD:

1. Attend MSA board meetings.
2. Come to the meetings prepared for discussion of the agenda items.
3. Listen to the opinions and views of others (including, but not limited to, other MSA board members, administration, staff, students, and community members).
4. Vote their conscience after informed discussion, unless abstaining because a conflict of interest exists.
5. Support the decision of the MSA board, even if their position concerning the issue was different.
6. Recognize the integrity of their predecessors and associates and appreciate their work.
7. Be primarily motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of MSA.
8. Inform myself about the proper duties and functions of a MSA board member.

IV. IN PERFORMING THE PROPER FUNCTIONS OF A MSA BOARD MEMBER:

1. Understand the role and operations of the board, its relationship with other governmental entities, and the statutes and rules under which the MSA boards governs.
2. Focus on the educational welfare of students attending MSA as much as possible.
3. Remember that board members' responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy; publicly participating in board policy-making discussions and decisions.
4. Do their best to protect, conserve, and advance MSA's progress.
5. Recognize that their responsibility, exercised through the actions of the MSA board as a whole, is to see that the schools are properly run – not to run them.
6. Work through the superintendent – not over or around the superintendent.
7. Delegate the implementation of MSA board decisions to the superintendent.

V. TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MSA BOARD:

1. Respect the rights of others to have and express opinions.
2. Recognize that authority rests with the MSA board in legal session – not with the individual members of the MSA board except as authorized by law.
3. Make no disparaging remarks, in or out of MSA board meetings, about other members of the MSA board or their opinions.
4. Keep an open mind about voting on any proposition until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.
5. Make decisions by voting in MSA board meetings after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. Work with other board members to establish policies and procedures that appropriately assist in the advancement of the board's goals and objectives.
7. Recognize that committees are appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the MSA board.

VI. IN MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE MSA COMMUNITY:

1. Attempt to appraise and plan for both the present and future educational needs of MSA.

2. Attempt to support acquisition of adequate financial support for MSA's programs.
3. Ensure that business transactions of MSA are ethical and open.
4. Strive to uphold responsibilities and accountability.
5. Recognize that individual board members have no authority to speak or act for the board without express permission from the board.

VII. IN WORKING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF MSA AND STAFF:

1. Delegate to the superintendent responsibility for the administration of MSA programs.
2. Give the superintendent authority commensurate with their responsibilities.
3. Ensure that MSA's hiring practices and policies are developed appropriately to employ the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in approving the hiring of new employees.
5. Participate in MSA board action after considering the recommendation of the superintendent and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
6. Keep informed about MSA programs by reviewing communications from the superintendent.
7. Offer the superintendent counsel and advice.
8. Recognize the status of the superintendent as the chief executive officer and a non-voting, ex officio member of the MSA board.
9. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or insist that they be presented in writing to the whole MSA board for proper referral according to the chain of command.
10. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.
11. Provide support for the superintendent and employees of MSA so they may perform their proper functions on a professional level.

VIII. IN FULFILLING LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AS A MSA BOARD MEMBER:

1. Comply with all federal, state, and local laws relating to my work as a MSA board member.
2. Comply with all MSA policies as adopted by the MSA board.
3. Abide by all rules and regulations from the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.

4. Recognize that MSA business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the MSA board.
5. Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using MSA board position for personal gain; recognizing that if there is a potential for personal conflict of interest in regard to a matter before the board, this information should be shared prior to any discussion and abstaining from voting on the matter.
6. Take no private action that will compromise the MSA board or administration.
7. Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.
8. Maintain accurate financial records and expect reimbursement only for those activities that advance collective board goals.
9. Take no individual action that will compromise the board's integrity and credibility.

Appendices:

Appendix 209A – MSA Board Member Oath of Office (form)

Appendix 209B – MSA Board Code of Conduct (form)

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 1 (School District Powers)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Powers)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendent)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 209 (Code of Ethics)