

**Board of Trustees
Douglas County School District****Article VII****CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 1) Only the board as a whole has authority. The board member will not take action or expect staff to act on individual statements, suggestions, or advice from individual board members. Once the board has acted, only the board can change that action. Members are obligated to abide by the majority decisions of the board while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels and in accordance with all other bylaws and policies.
- 2) The board president, or his/her designee, is the primary spokesperson for the board. The superintendent is the primary spokesperson for the school district. The board president and all board members are encouraged to assist with school district communication in the community. Public presentations will accurately and fairly reflect board decisions and process.

Regarding matters on which the board has taken action, board members will defer to the board president when possible to make statements on behalf of the board. The president and board members are cautioned against stating his/her personal opinions unless specifically asked, and needs to identify personal opinions as such. The board president, when possible, will make statements on behalf of the board including responding to written correspondence written to all board members collectively, or will refer said correspondence to the superintendent when appropriate.

- 3) In the absence of the president, the vice president will fulfill the role of president. The role of the clerk includes monitoring of time for public comment at meetings. All officers may participate in Agenda Review meetings and sign legal documents as appropriate.
- 4) Any board member who testifies before any public or legislative body will first state the board's position before his/her own. Board members appointed as legislative liaisons may testify as a DCSD representative on matters on which the board has taken action or given direction. The superintendent will be informed of any contacts made with legislators by board members on any issue related to operation of the Douglas County School District. The superintendent will keep the board informed of the school district's response regarding legislation on which the board has not taken a position.
- 5) Board members who serve as a board designee on district or community panels, board, or committees shall update the entire board monthly regarding matters of importance to the board or the District related to their service on such panels, boards, or committees. (i.e. The board's representative on the Parks and Recreation Board shall report back on matters of importance to the district.)
- 6) Board meetings are for deliberation, decision making, action, and votes. Board discussion should be concise and pertinent to the issue. While an item may be placed on the board agenda and designated for discussion and possible action, the Board is not required to act if additional information or input is required. If a board member needs more information or has questions, the superintendent should be contacted before the meeting, or be given direction for further action during the meeting. Facts and/or information that will be needed from the administration will be referred through the superintendent.
- 7) Board members carry a public trust and should carry out their duties in a professional and courteous manner. Board members should strive to present their views in a professional and respectful manner, working with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion. Board members should extend every courtesy to those who appear before the board. Non-verbal communication must be respectful.

- 8) The last stop, not the first, will be the board. Board members are expected to receive complaints and should assure community members that the complaint is acknowledged and understood. Board members should remind the complainant that they have no authority as an individual, and should redirect them to ensure the chain of command is followed. While the board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue and keep the superintendent informed of the issue. Problems identified by board members, or those involving personnel, should be reported directly to the superintendent. Board members have a judicial review responsibility, which requires the member to remain unbiased.
- 9) Any board member who has a dispute shall first try to resolve the issue by meeting with the board president and the superintendent to resolve the dispute. If the meeting does not resolve the issue, the board president shall place it on the agenda of a regularly scheduled board meeting for discussion and action by the board. Should the dispute involve employees, proper notice shall be issued in accordance with NRS to assure no violation of employee contracts, agreements or State laws and regulations.
- 10) Board meetings are where the board does its work in public. Board members will be prepared and open-minded when speaking to the issues on the agenda. Each board member should seek to understand all sides of a topic as presented by fellow board members and all other speakers.
- 11) Board members should direct all requests for information, which are unrelated to a board agenda item, to either the superintendent or the board secretary. Any individual request by a board member that requires staff to create reports, projects, or compile information that would, in the opinion of the superintendent require more than one half hour of staff time, requires consensus of the full Board unless agreed to by the superintendent. The superintendent will copy all board members on all requests for information and on any reports generated from requests.

As a means of fulfilling its mission, each board member will:

- A. Be an advocate for public education;
- B. Help the people of the community understand the importance of public education and the need to support it;
- C. Uphold and enforce all laws, State Board rules and regulations (Nevada Administrative Code, Douglas County School District Board Policy and Administrative Regulations), and court orders pertaining to schools.
- D. Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use their position as a school board member to benefit either themselves or any other individual agency apart from the total interest of the school jurisdiction.
- E. Make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and strive for public schools which can meet the individual needs of every learner regardless of race, gender, creed, disability, sexual orientation, or social standing;
- F. Support employees in the proper performance of their duties, with respect and consideration due skilled professionals, recognizing that his/her responsibility is not to run the schools but, together with fellow board members, to see that they are well run;
- G. Strive for a positive working relationship with the superintendent, respecting the superintendent's authority to advise the board, implement board policy and administer the district:

- H. Be informed on education issues that regularly come before the board through personal experience, individual study and/or by participating in board members' professional development opportunities;
- I. Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issues;
- J. Recognize that authority rests with the whole board assembled in public meetings, make no personal promises and avoid any private action which may compromise the Board or its policies;
- K. Refuse to surrender independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends;
- L. Keep confidential information in confidence and disclose no private or confidential information that relates to district employees or students. Maintain confidentiality of information and discussion conducted in executive/closed session;
- M. Be informed of the vision, mission and strategic goals of Nevada Association of School Boards as the board develops its strategic goals and/or makes decisions;
- N. Understand and abide by the Open Meeting Law.
- O. Recognize the importance of continuous learning and make professional development a priority.
- P. Violation of these principles will be addressed by the board president.

Legal References NRS 281.411 – 281.581: Ethics in Government Law, Nevada

Adopted: 04/09/02
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