

## BCA – BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS

Issued 1/06

---

Purpose: **The Board and its members will conduct themselves lawfully with integrity and high ethical standards in order to model the behaviors expected of staff and students and to build public confidence and credibility. To establish the basic structure for ethical board conduct. The public schools play a vital and important role in our state and country by providing the basic foundation for democratic living and for sustaining the American way of life. Therefore, school board membership represents a challenging responsibility.** This code of ethics is adopted by the board as a guide to its members as they strive to render effective and efficient service to their community.

A board member should honor the critical responsibilities that his/her membership demands by doing the following:

- thinking always in terms of "children first"
- understanding that the basic function of a school board is policymaking, not administration, and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions
- accepting the responsibility along with his/her fellow board members of ensuring that optimal facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of schools
- refusing to play politics in either the traditional partisan or any petty sense
- representing, at all times, the entire school district
- accepting the responsibility of becoming well informed concerning the duties of board members and the proper functions of public schools
- recognizing responsibility as a state official to seek the improvement of education throughout the state

A board member should respect his/her relationships with other members of the board by doing the following:

- 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
- recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates and the merit of their work
- refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter **in which the board is presiding in a quasi-judicial capacity and in** which **the matter** should properly come before the board as a whole
- making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed
- respecting the opinion of others and graciously conforming to the principle of majority rule
- 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
- maintaining the confidentiality of matters discussed in executive session

A board member should maintain desirable relations with the superintendent of schools and his/her staff by doing the following:

- striving to procure, when a vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post
- 
- giving the superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties and holding him/her responsible for acceptable results
- acting only upon the recommendation of the superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel
- having the superintendent **or his designee** present at all meetings of the board except when his/her contract and salary are under consideration
- referring all complaints to the superintendent and discussing them only at a regular meeting if a failure to arrive at an administrative solution occurs
- 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
- presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the superintendent

Adopted 2/24/69; Revised 1/9/06

Legal references:

School board members are under the jurisdiction of the " Ethics, Government Accountability and Campaign Reform Act," Section 8-13-100, et seq., S.C. Code, and are subject to rules of conduct of the statute.

School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties