

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

A School Board Member should honor the high responsibility that membership demands:

- BY thinking always in terms of "children first."
- BY understanding that the basic function of the Board member is "policy making" NOT "administrative," and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions.
- BY accepting the responsibility, along with fellow board members, to assure that adequate facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of schools.
- BY refusing to "play politics" in either the traditional partisan, or in any petty sense.
- BY representing the entire school community at all times.
- BY accepting the responsibility of becoming well-informed concerning the duties of board members, and the proper functions of public schools.
- BY recognizing responsibility as a State official to seek the improvement of education throughout the state.

A Board Member should demonstrate respectful relationships with other members of the Board:

- BY 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.
- BY recognizing the integrity of previous board members, and the merit of their work.
- BY refusing to make statements or promises as to how he or she will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole.
- BY making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.
- BY respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of "majority rule."
- BY 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.

BY working with fellow board members and the administration to fairly determine the present and future educational needs of the community.

A Board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of schools and other employees:

BY striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post.

BY giving the superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging the professional duties of the position and also by holding the superintendent responsible for achieving acceptable results.

BY acting only after considering the superintendent's recommendations on matters of school governance.

BY having the superintendent present at all meetings of the Board except when his or her contract and salary are under consideration.

BY respecting proper communication channels, referring all complaints to the proper administrative office, and considering them only after failure of an administrative solution.

BY 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.

BY presenting personal criticisms of employees directly to the superintendent.

A Board member should maintain a commitment to the community:

BY developing and adopting a mission and a vision statement for the Cooperative.

BY conducting all school business transactions openly.

BY refusing to use the Board position for personal gain.

BY vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.

BY refusing to discuss confidential board business anywhere other than when attending an advertised board meeting.

BY earning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.

Board members should also abide by *Policy A125 Nepotism, Conflict of Interest, Gifts, and Use of Cooperative Resources*.

Source: Indiana School Boards Association
Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District

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