

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Conflict of Interest**

### **Civility Code**

Board members of the New London Board of Education will strive to improve student achievement in public education, and to that end will:

1. Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible, review relevant information and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. Recognize their responsibility as agents of the State to seek the improvement of education throughout the State;
3. Focus their attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation;
4. Ensure that all sides have a fair opportunity to present their respective positions;
5. Recognize that a Board member has no authority as an individual, and that decisions can only be made by a majority vote at a board meeting;
6. Ensure that criticism of opposing viewpoints is expressed as criticism of a position, not a person when advocating for a belief or position;
7. Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with fellow Board members in a meeting;
8. Respect the opinions of others, and abide by each decision of the Board as a whole, regardless of personal votes;
9. Listen respectfully to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community;
10. 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;
11. Recognize the importance of an effective governance team;
12. Respect the rights of the minority while working toward the will of the majority, and recognize the importance of achieving consensus as an important tool in community-building;
13. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent;

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### **Civility Code (cont.)**

14. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff by appropriate supervisors;
15. Conduct all business in an open and transparent manner, consistent with the intent and spirit of the open meeting law requirements;
16. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in executive session;
17. Model civility to students, employees, and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all board members and engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow board members on matters being considered by the board.
18. Present personal criticism of district operations or of any employee directly to the Superintendent;
19. Understand the chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the proper administrative office while refraining from actions that could compromise my ability to act if the issue rises to the board level;
20. Take no private action that will compromise the Board and administration;
21. Refrain from using the board position for personal or partisan gain and avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety;
22. Be informed about the duties of school board members and current educational issues through professional development, such as programs sponsored by my state and national school boards associations;
23. Remember always that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the New London Public Schools.

### **Meeting Protocol**

To ensure that the Board's meetings are conducted with maximum effectiveness and efficiency, members will:

1. come to meetings on time and adequately prepared;
2. identify issues of concern before the meeting, whenever possible;
3. circulate proposed motions and amendments, whenever possible, at least 48 hours before meeting;
4. speak only when recognized;

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### Civility Code (cont.)

5. not interrupt each other during debate;
6. not engage in disruptive and disrespectful side conversations;
7. minimize unnecessary repetition;
8. not monopolize the discussion;
9. address the merits of the issue being discussed without appealing to the biases, prejudices and emotions of the audience;
10. support the chair of the meeting's efforts to facilitate an orderly meeting;
11. communicate openly and actively in discussion and dialog to avoid surprises;
12. value equal participation of all members;
13. practice respectful body language;
14. listen actively when other members speak; and
15. not surprise or embarrass each other or members of the staff.

Bylaw adopted by the Board: June 9, 2016

Bylaw revised by the Board: May 27, 2021

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New London, Connecticut