

Board Information: November 28, 2022
Board Approval: December 12, 2022 [NEW/MSBA Model Policy/Modified]
Contact Person: Superintendent

POLICY 209 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS

I. PURPOSE

To assist the individual school board member in understanding their role as part of a school board and in recognizing the contribution that each member must make to develop an effective and responsible school board.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Each school board member shall follow the code of ethics stated in this policy.

A. A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WILL:

1. Attend school board meetings; notify the chair if going to be absent.
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 school board members, administration, staff, students, and community members).
4. Keep an open mind about how they will vote on any proposition until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.
5. Make decisions after all sides of debatable questions have been presented, including those of the superintendent.
6. Participate in school board action after considering the recommendation of the superintendent and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
7. Vote in school board meetings, unless abstaining because a conflict of interest exists.
8. Respect a majority decision as a decision of the board as whole, and treat it as such in public.

B. IN PERFORMING PROPER FUNCTIONS, A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WILL:

1. Be informed about and perform the proper duties and functions of a school board member, as indicated by the Minnesota School Board Association.
2. Be primarily motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of the school district.
3. Prioritize district interest over self-interest, putting aside any conflicting loyalty a member may have to advocacy, partisan or other interest groups.
4. Focus on education policy as much as possible.
5. Remember their responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy.
6. Consider themselves a trustee of public education and do their best to protect, conserve, and advance its progress.
7. Recognize that the responsibility, exercised through the actions of the school board as a whole, is to see that the schools are properly run – not to run them.
8. Work through the superintendent – not over or around the superintendent.
9. Delegate and support the implementation of school board decisions to the superintendent.
10. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or insist that they be presented in writing to the whole school board for proper referral according to the chain of command, and abstain from individual counsel and action.

C. IN MAINTAINING RELATIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS, A SCHOOL BOARD WILL:

1. Respect the rights of others to have and express opinions.
2. Recognize that authority rests with the school board in legal session – not with the individual members of the school board except as authorized by law.

3. Make no disparaging remarks publicly, in or out of school board meetings, about other members of the school board or district staff.
4. Recognize the integrity of our predecessors and associates and appreciate their work.

D. IN MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COMMUNITY, A BOARD MEMBER WILL:

1. Attempt to appraise and plan for both the present and future educational needs of the school district and community.
2. Attempt to obtain adequate financial support for the school district's programs.
3. Insist that business transactions of the school district be ethical and open.
4. Strive to uphold their responsibilities and accountability to the taxpayers in the school district.
5. Insist that committees be appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the school board.

E. IN WORKING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND STAFF, A BOARD MEMBER WILL:

1. Hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school district.
2. Give the superintendent authority commensurate with their responsibilities.
3. Assure that the school district will be administered by the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in hiring all employees and contractors.
5. Insist the superintendent keep the school board adequately informed at all times.
6. Offer the superintendent counsel and advice.

7. Recognize the status of the superintendent as the chief executive officer and a non-voting, ex officio member of the school board.
8. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent in a private setting.
9. Provide support for the superintendent and employees of the school district so they may perform their proper functions on a professional level.

F. IN FULFILLING LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WILL:

1. Comply with all federal, state, and local laws relating to work as a school board member.
2. Comply with all school district policies as adopted by the school board.
3. Abide by all rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.
4. Recognize that school district business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the school board.
5. Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using their school board position for personal gain.
6. Take no private action that will compromise the school board or administration.
7. Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.