

209 CODE OF ETHICS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist school board members in recognizing the role of individual school board members and the contribution that each 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. AS A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD I WILL:

1. Listen.
2. Recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates.
3. Appreciate the merit of their work.
4. Be motivated only by a desire to serve the pupils of my district.
5. Attempt to inform myself on the proper duties and functions of a school board member.
6. Recognize that it is my responsibility, together with other school board members, to see that the schools are properly run, not to run them myself.
7. Work through the administration employees of the school board – not over or around them.
8. Recognize that school business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the school board.

B. IN PERFORMING THE PROPER FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER I WILL:

1. Perform under education policies unless necessity requires otherwise.
2. Function in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine as part of a policy-forming body – not as an administrative officer.
3. Consider myself a trustee of public education and do my best to protect, conserve, and advance its progress.

C. TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD I WILL:

1. Respect the right 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, in or out of school board meetings, about other members of the school board or their opinions.
4. Recognize that to promise in advance of a meeting how I will vote on any proposition is to close my mind and agree not to think through other points of view which may be presented to the meeting.
5. Make decisions in school board meetings only after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. Delegate details of school board action to administrative employees.
7. Insist that special committees be appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the school board.

D. IN MEETING MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY COMMUNITY I WILL:

1. Attempt to appraise both the present and future educational needs of the school district.
2. Attempt to obtain adequate financial support for the school program.
3. Interpret the needs and attitudes of the community and do my best to translate them into the educational program of the school district.
4. Consider it an important responsibility to interpret the educational program of the school as it relates to the needs of the community.
5. Insist that business transactions of the school district be on an ethical, open, and above board basis.

E. IN WORKING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND STAFF I WILL:

1. Hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school district.
2. Give the superintendent authority commensurate with the responsibility.
3. Assure that the school district will be administered by the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in the appointment of all employees.

5. Participate in school board action after considering the recommendation of the superintendent and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
6. Expect the superintendent to keep the school board adequately informed at all times through both oral and written reports.
7. Spend adequate time in school board meetings on educational policies.
8. Give the superintendent counsel and advice.
9. Recognize the status of the superintendent as an ex officio member of the school board.
10. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or insist that they be presented in writing to the whole school board.
11. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.
12. 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 MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AS A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER I WILL:

1. Comply with all federal, state and local laws relating to my function 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 federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 1 (School District Powers)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Powers)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendent)

Cross References: MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 1, School Board Member Code of Ethics