

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

A 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 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

MSD of Washington Township

Adopted: 3/27/24

Revised: [date]