

B-12 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

Because of the vital and important role which the public schools of our state and country play in providing the basic foundation for democratic living and for sustaining the American way of life, and because, therefore, school board membership represents such a challenging responsibility, this Code of Ethics is recommended by the Indiana School Boards Association as a guide to school board members as they strive to render effective and efficient service to their respective communities.

A School Board member should honor the high responsibility which his membership demands:

BY thinking always in terms of "students first."

BY understanding that the basic function of the school Board member is "policy-making" and not "administrative", and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions.

BY accepting the responsibility along with his fellow Board members of seeing that the maximum of facilities and resources is provided for the proper functioning of schools.

BY refusing to "play politics" in either the traditional partisan, or in any petty sense.

BY representing at all times the entire school community.

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 School Board member should respect his 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 such meetings.

BY recognizing the integrity of his predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work.

BY refusing to make statements or promises as to how he 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.

A School Board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of schools and his staff:

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 his professional duties, and also by holding him responsible for acceptable results.

BY acting only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.

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

BY referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them only at a regular meeting after failure of 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 any employee directly to the Superintendent.

A School Board member should meet his responsibility to his community:

BY attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community.

BY regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community.

BY insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis.

BY vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.

BY refusing to use his position on a school board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige.

BY refusing to discuss personnel matters or any other confidential business of the Board in his home, on the street, or in his office.

BY winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interests of students.

SOURCE: Plainfield Community School Corporation
Plainfield, IN
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