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White Bear Lake Area School Board Policy 209

209 CODE OF ETHICS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist the individual school board members in understanding his or her 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.

III. CODE OF ETHICS

A. As a member of the school board, I will:

1. Attend school board meetings.
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. Vote my conscience after informed discussion, unless I abstain because a conflict of interest exists.
5. Support each decision of the school board, regardless of the position I take during discussions leading to the final decision.
6. Recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates and respect their work.
7. Be primarily motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of my school district.
8. Inform myself about the proper duties and functions of a school board member.

B. In performing the proper functions of a school board member, I will:

1. Make policy the primary focus of my school board duties.
2. Consider myself a trustee of public education and do my best to protect, conserve, and advance its progress.
3. Recognize that my 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 myself.
4. Work through the superintendent – not over or around the superintendent.
5. Delegate the implementation of school board decisions to the superintendent.

C. To maintain relations with other members of the school board, I 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, in or out of school board meetings, about other members of the school board or their opinions.
4. Keep an open mind about how I will vote on any proposition until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.
5. Make decisions by voting in school board meetings after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. Work to ensure that 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 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 conducted in an ethical and transparent manner.
4. Strive to uphold my responsibilities and accountability to the taxpayers in my school district.

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 his or her responsibilities.
3. Work to ensure that the school district is administered by the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in the hiring of all district employees.
5. Participate in school board action after considering the superintendent's recommendation and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information in support of the recommendation.
6. Insist that the superintendent ~~to~~ keep the school board adequately informed at all times.
7. Offer the superintendent counsel and advice.
8. Recognize the status of the superintendent as the chief executive officer and a non-voting, ex officio member of the school board.
9. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or request that complaints be presented in writing to the entire school board for proper referral according to the district chain of command.
10. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.
11. Provide support for the superintendent and employees of the school district so they may perform their proper functions to the best of their abilities.

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 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 my 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.

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