

TOPIC CATEGORY: BOARD OF EDUCATION
NUMBER CATEGORY: 1000
TITLE: A CODE OF ETHICS
NUMBER: 1110

With guidance from the model Code of Conduct developed by the Nebraska Association of School Boards, this Policy sets forth the standards of conduct and ethical behavior required of members of the Board of Education of the District.

Each member of the District's Board of Education shall, at all times during his or her service on the Board, conduct themselves professionally and in a manner fitting their position, and shall comply with the provisions of all Board Policies and applicable laws and ethical codes.

1. BOARD GOVERNANCE

- a. Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible, review advance materials provided, and become informed concerning issues presented to the Board;
- b. Act only as a member of the Board, in recognition of state law that Board members do not possess authority to act individually;
- c. Promulgate and adhere to Board policies that are aligned with Nebraska and federal law;
- d. Make decisions on Board issues only by way of discussion and vote at public Board meetings held in compliance with state open meeting laws;
- e. Strive, through service on the Board, to maintain and further the vision of the District;
- f. Maintain the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, including student educational records information and confidentiality of information received in executive session;
- g. Request information and recommendations from the Superintendent and legal counsel when required for full and informed consideration of issues involving legal compliance; and
- h. Devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a school board member in order to render effective and creditable service.

2. BOARD-ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIP

- a. Hire and/or supervise the Superintendent, who is delegated the authority and responsibility for administration of the educational program;
- b. Operate as a policy-making body, with implementation of those policies and operation of the District delegated to the Superintendent and his or her administrators and staff members;
- c. Maintain open and candid communication with the Superintendent;
- d. Jointly create, with the Superintendent, job performance goals, and at least annually perform an evaluation of the Superintendent's performance;
- e. Require the Superintendent and administrators to keep the Board regularly informed of the operation of the District; and
- f. Relay complaints, requests, and concerns from the community to the Superintendent and/or administrators for response and/or follow-up in accordance with applicable Board policies.

3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- a. Reach decisions based on the available facts, retain independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- b. Maintain cordial and professional relations with administrators, staff members, parents, and members of the community;
- c. Encourage the free expression of opinion, communications and collaboration between the Board and the community; and
- d. Communicate to other Board members and to the Superintendent the views of the community regarding Board Policies and operation of the District.

4. BOARD MEMBER RELATIONS

- a. Work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during vigorous debate of points at issue;
- b. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff and the community;
- c. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board Policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent; and
- d. Respect and encourage the free expression of opinion by fellow Board members and participate in Board discussions in an open, honest and respectful manner, honoring differences of opinion or perspective.

5. ETHICAL/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- a. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest;
- b. Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
- c. Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the District;
- d. Not solicit or accept, whether directly or indirectly, anything of value, including a gift, loan, contribution, reward or promise of future employment based on an agreement that the vote, official action, or judgment of the Board member would be influenced thereby;
- e. Not use or authorize his or her public office nor any confidential information received through the holding of public office to obtain financial gain, other than compensation provided by law, for himself or herself, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which the individual is associated;
- f. Not accept, nor permit a member of his or her immediate family to accept, a gift of travel or lodging or a gift of reimbursement for travel or lodging if the gift is made so that a member of the Board member's immediate family can accompany the Board member in the performance of his or her duties as a Board member;
- g. Not use or authorize the use of public resources for the purpose of campaigning for or against the nomination or election of any candidate or the qualification, passage or defeat of a ballot question; and
- h. Comply with all legal requirements and Board policies governing conflicts of interest.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- a. Stay informed about educational issues through individual study and participation in Board development opportunities and seminars;
- b. Support new Board members by participating in orientation activities and ongoing sharing of knowledge and experience; and
- c. Collaborate with Board members from other school districts.

7. ENFORCEMENT

- a. The Board is responsible for enforcing this Policy. If any member of the Board commits a serious or repeated violation of this Policy, the Board may take any of the following steps:
 - i. The Board president may confer with the Board member who has violated the Policy in order to:
 - 1. Identify the provision(s) of this Policy that the member has violated;
 - 2. Propose how the member can remedy the violation;
 - 3. If the Board member who violated this Policy is the Board president, the vice president is empowered to confer with the president about the violation.
 - b. The Board may discuss the violation(s) as an agenda item at a meeting to confront the offending Board member. However, the Board will not enter closed session to hold the discussion of the ethics violation unless the Open Meetings Act authorizes a closed session.
 - c. The Board may vote to publicly censure any Board member who commits a serious or repeated violation of this Policy. The Board will pass a censure motion to inform the community that an individual member of the Board is not fulfilling the responsibilities for which he or she was elected.

POLICY ADOPTED: April 3, 1973

POLICY REVIEWED AND ADOPTED: December 1, 1986

POLICY AMENDED: November 15, 2004

POLICY AMENDED: February 2, 2015

POLICY AMENDED: April 19, 2021

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. 49-14,101, et seq.

Cross-Reference: Board Policy 1115 – Conflicts of Interest