

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

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 responsibility is adopted as a guide to members as they strive to render effective and efficient services.

1. A school board member should honor the high responsibility that his/her membership demands:
  - By thinking always in terms of “children first.”
  - By understanding that the basic function of school board members is “policy-making” and not “administrative” and by accepting the distinction between these two functions.
  - By accepting the responsibility along with his/her fellow board members of seeing that the optimal level of facilities and resources is provided for the proper functioning of schools.
  - By refusing to “play politics” in either the traditional partisan manner 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.
  - By reading the information provided to him/her and to contact the District Administrator or other appropriate staff members to request additional information that may be deemed necessary to assist him/her in his/her decision-making responsibilities.
  
2. A school board member should respect his/her relationship with other members of the Board:
  - By recognizing that authority rests only with the Board at official meetings and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the Board outside of such meetings.
  - By recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates and the merits of their work.
  - By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter.
  - 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.”

3. A school board member should maintain desirable relations with the District Administrator and his/her staff:
  - By striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post.
  - By giving the District Administrator full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties and also by holding him/her responsible for achieving results.
  - By acting only upon the recommendation of the District Administrator in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
  - By having the District Administrator present at all meetings of the Board except when his/her contract or salary are under consideration.
  - By referring all complaints to the proper administrative office. A Board member should discuss complaints only at a regular or special meeting after failure of an administrative solution.
  - By striving to provide adequate safeguards around the District Administrator 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 District Administrator.
  
4. A school board member should meet his/her responsibilities to his/her 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 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 winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.
  
5. A school board member should adhere to any ethical standards required by law.

LEGAL REF:           Section 19.59 Wisconsin Statutes

CROSS REF:           164, Gifts and Gratuities

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