

## SCHOOL BOARD CONDUCT/ETHICS

As representatives of the citizens in the Evansville Community School District, the Board of Education is responsible for serving the best interests of the students and the community, utilizing all available resources toward that end. The oath of office requires that Board members uphold the laws and Constitutions of the United States and the State of Wisconsin.

Consequently, members of the Board subscribe to the following code:

1. A Board member shall honor the high responsibility which membership demands:
  - a. By thinking always in terms of children first;
  - b. By understanding that the basic function of the Board is policymaking and not administrative and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions;
  - c. By accepting the responsibility along with fellow Board members to maximize the resources provided for the proper functioning of schools;
  - d. By refusing to play politics in either the traditional partisan, or in any other sense;
  - e. By representing at all times the entire school community;
  - f. By accepting and recognizing the responsibility of a school district official to seek the improvement of education throughout the school district and the state.
  
2. A Board member shall conduct respectful relationships with other members of the Board:
  - a. 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, unless he/she is a Board officer carrying out duties authorized by law.
  - b. By recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work;
  - c. By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole;
  - d. By making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed;
  - e. By respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of majority rule;
  - f. By refusing to participate in irregular meetings which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend.
  
3. A Board member shall meet his/her responsibility to his/her community:
  - a. By attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community;
  - b. By regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the policies and procedures of the District to the community;
  - c. By insisting that all school business transactions be conducted in an open, ethical, and above-board manner;

- d. By vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools;
  - e. By winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interest of school children;
  - f. By being fiscally responsible to the community.
4. A Board member shall maintain a positive relationship with the District Administrator and his/her staff:
- a. By acting upon the recommendation of the District Administrator in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel;
  - b. By following proper Board policy and procedure when dealing with complaints and discussing them only at a regular meeting in accordance with Board policy;
  - c. By presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the District Administrator.
5. A Board member shall strive to improve public education and to that end:
- a. Remember always that his/her first and greatest concern must be for the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools;
  - b. Work under state and federal laws and communicate with state and federal legislators concerning the problems and needs involved in providing a quality education;
  - c. Attend all regularly scheduled Board/Committee meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
  - d. Recognize that he/she should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
  - e. Render all decisions based on the available facts and their independent judgments, and refuse to surrender such judgments to individuals or special interest group;
  - f. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communications between the Board, students, staff and all members of the community;
  - g. Communicate to other Board members and the District Administrator expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
  - h. Keep informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations;
  - i. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff and insist on a regular impartial evaluation of all staff;
  - j. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using their Board positions for personal or partisan gain;
  - k. Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable laws.

Legal Ref.: Chapter 19 Subchapter III Wisconsin Statutes (Code of Ethics for Public Officials and Employees)

- 120.12 (School Board Duties)
- 120.13 (School Board Powers)
- 946.10 (Bribery of Public Officers and Employees)
- 946.12 (Misconduct in Public Office)
- 946.13 (Private Interest in Public Contract Prohibited)