

R 1-8-1 Code of Ethics for Board Members

Members of the Board of Education, representing all the citizens of the county must recognize that:

- ❖ Their fellow citizens have entrusted them with the educational development of the children and youth of this county;
- ❖ The public expects their first and greatest concern to be in the best interest of each and every one of these young people without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be;
- ❖ The future welfare of this county, of this state, and of the nation depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education provided in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner;
- ❖ Board members must take the initiative in helping all the people of this county to have all the facts about their schools all the time, to build the trust necessary to provide the finest possible school program, school staff, and school facilities;
- ❖ Legally the authority of the Board is derived from the State which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the county school board and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this county for the exercise of local autonomy; and
- ❖ Board members must never neglect their personal obligation to the county and their legal obligation to the state, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization. Beyond that, they have a moral and civic obligation to the nation which can remain strong and free only so long as public schools in the United States of America are kept free and strong.

In view of the foregoing considerations, it shall be each Board member's constant endeavor to:

- ❖ Devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a school board member so that s/he may render effective and creditable service;
- ❖ Work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during the vigorous debate of a point or issue;
- ❖ Base personal decision upon all available facts in each situation, to vote his/her honest conviction in every case, uninfluenced by partisan bias of any kind, thereafter to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board;
- ❖ Remember at all times that as an individual s/he has no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board, and to conduct his/her relationships with the school staff, the local citizenry, and all representatives of the media on the basis of this fact;
- ❖ Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use his/her position as a school board member to benefit either himself/herself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school district;
- ❖ Recognize that it is as important for the Board to understand and evaluate the educational program of the schools as it is to plan for the business of school operation;
- ❖ Bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the schools are to be administered, but that the administration of the

educational program and the conduct of school business shall be left to the Superintendent of schools and his professional and non-professional staff;

- ❖ Welcome and encourage active cooperation by citizens, organizations, and the media of communication in the district with respect to establishing policy on current school operation and proposed future developments;
- ❖ Support the State and National School Boards Association; and
- ❖ Strive toward the ideal conditions required for effective school board service to his/her county, in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.
(WVSBA)