

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

Having accepted the challenge of service on the Board of Education, I accept the principles set forth in the following code of ethics to guide me in helping to provide free public education to all the children of the State of Maine.

1. I will view service on a board of education as an opportunity to serve my community, state, and nation, because I believe public education is the best means to promote the welfare of our people and to preserve our democratic way of life.
2. I will at all times think of children first and base my decisions on how they will affect children, their education, and their training.
3. I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the board meetings, about other members of the board or their opinions.
4. I will remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board and that I will conduct my relationship with the school staff, the local citizenry, and all media of communications on the basis of this fact.
5. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to operate the schools, but to see that they are well operated.
6. I will seek to provide education for all children in the community, commensurate with their needs and abilities.
7. I will listen to all citizens but will refer all complaints to the proper authorities and will discuss such complaints only at a regular meeting after failure of administrative solution.
8. I will support a decision graciously once it has been made by the majority of the board.
9. I will not criticize employees publicly, but will make such criticism to the superintendent for investigation and action, if necessary.
10. I will make decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.
11. I will refuse to make promises as to how I will vote on a matter that should properly come before the board as a whole.
12. I will not discuss the confidential business of the board in my home, on the street, or in my office; the place for such discussion being the school board meeting.

13. I will confine by board action to policymaking, planning, and appraisal, leaving the administration of the schools to the school superintendent.
14. I will welcome and encourage cooperation and participation by teachers, administrators, and other personnel in developing policies, which affect their welfare and that of the children they serve.
15. I will endeavor at all times to see that schools have adequate financial support within the capabilities of the community and state, in order that every child may receive the best possible education.
16. I will resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a school board member to benefit myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school district.
17. I will recognize at all times that the Board of Education of which I am a member is an agent of the state, and as such I will abide by the laws of the state and the regulations which are formulated by the State Board of Education, which is responsible for educational policies as determined by legislative acts.

Source: Adapted from Handbook for Maine School Committee Members, published by the Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services and the Maine School Management Association (1974), and adopted by the State School Boards Association Inc., of Maine.

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Department of Public Schools, Augusta, Maine