

Watertown School District 14-4

CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics signifies the strong commitment on the part of the School Board to base decisions and actions on ethical standards. It recognizes the role of professional behavior necessary to fulfill the obligation of being effective and responsible Board members.

While serving as a member of the Watertown School Board, I will:

- 1. — View service on a School Board 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 self-government.
- 2. — Work unremittingly to help the people in my community understand the importance of public education and willingly support the level of education desired by the community.
- 3. — Make decisions in terms of the best interests of the educational welfare of children. I will seek to provide an educational opportunity equally open to all children regardless of ability, race, creed, socio-economic status, or location of residence.
- 4. — Recognize that my responsibility is not to run the schools but to see that they are well run. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning and appraisal.
- 5. — Avoid conflict of interest by refusing to represent special interests or partisan policies or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends or supporters.
- 6. — Be fair, honest, and professional in all school-related conversations and decisions.
- 7. — Arrive at conclusions only after I have discussed matters fully with members of the professional staff and Board members. I will graciously support decisions reached by a majority of the Board at an assembled meeting.
- 8. — Recognize that authority rests with the whole Board assembled in meeting and that I have no legal status to bind the Board outside a meeting.
- 9. — Support and protect school personnel in performance of their duties. I will vote to hire only competent and trained, technical and professional personnel who have been properly recommended by the appropriate administrative officer.
- 10. — Refer all complaints, to the appropriate administrative officer and only after failure of administrative solution will I discuss such matters at a Board meeting.
- 11. — Observe and enforce State laws and regulations pertaining to public education.

Members of the District's Board of Education are elected or appointed officials of local government, and are responsible for governing the educational system of the public school district. Each Board of Education governing board member shall:

1. adhere to the principle that the responsibility of the school board is to govern the District, which includes but is not limited to establishing goals, planning, developing effective policies, and evaluation;

2. practice good stewardship of the District's resources;
3. leave the daily administration of schools to the Superintendent;
4. participate in professional development;
5. recognize and follow the legal principles that (a) the authority vests with the majority of the members of the governing board when assembled in meetings as authorized by law, (b) no individual school board member has, or a minority of school board members have, the legal right to bind the District, and (c) no individual school board member may make decisions on behalf of the District unless upon approval of a majority of school board members;
6. make informed decisions on matters brought before the school board;
7. recognize and adhere to the policy that it is the responsibility of the school board to plan, make, implement, appraise, and enforce policies and that it is not the responsibility of the school board or school board members to run the day-to-day operations of the District;
8. observe and enforce federal and state laws and regulations;
9. respect the limited intent and scope of executive sessions as set forth in statute;
10. respect confidential communications made during executive sessions held pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2 and shall not divulge privileged communications made during executive session held pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2 unless required by law, and shall respect confidential communications related to students and employees, and shall not discuss such confidential information at home, at work or in public;
11. distinguish between personal views and those of the school board when making public comments regarding school district matters;
12. present information to the school board without distortion and accurately represent facts concerning school district matters in direct or indirect public statements;
13. maintain professional relationships in a manner which are free of vindictiveness, recrimination and harassment;
14. refer persons having complaints to the applicable complaint policy and appropriate school administrator; refrain from giving an opinion on the merits of the complaint unless, following the complaint procedure required in the school board complaint policy, the matter is before the school board;
15. respect the legitimacy of the goals and interests of other school board members and respect the rights of other school board members to pursue goals and policies different from their own;
16. respect, require and contribute to the maintenance of order and decorum in proceedings before the school board;
17. be honest, patient, dignified, and courteous to those with whom he/she deals with in his/her official capacity;
18. diligently discharge responsibilities and dispose promptly of the business of the school district for which he/she is responsible;
19. inform the school board president or school district business manager as soon as possible upon learning that he/she will not be in attendance at a school board meeting;
20. refrain from personal, professional, business and financial dealings that interfere with or are in conflict with, or give the appearance of interfering with or being in conflict with, the performance of official duties;
21. not use the office of a school board member to promote political candidates or partisan political activities;

22. not accept nor offer any gratuities, gifts, services, or things of value that (a) impair professional judgement, (b) offer special advantage or benefit to any person or organization, or (c) provide a direct or indirect personal benefit;
23. not commit any act of moral turpitude or gross immorality;
24. render a decision as a school board member only after having discussed the matter with other board members in a legal school board meeting, after having reviewed applicable information and data, and after having considered recommendations including but not limited to recommendations from school administration;
25. support Board decisions made by the majority of governing board members, subject to a board member's right to formally make a motion at a school board meeting to have the decision reconsidered or rescinded;
26. Pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1), the Board of Education may enter into executive session to discuss the performance of an elected school board member, which may include discussing a perceived or alleged violation of this policy. Should the majority of school board members determine that a school board member has violated one or more provisions of this policy, the school board may, in open session, reprimand the school board member for a violation of the School Board Member Code of Ethics.

Policy

Adopted: 11/10/08

Revised: 4/25

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BOARD OFFICERS

The annual meeting of the district School Board shall be on the 2nd Monday of July. If circumstances warrant, the date of the annual meeting may be changed by a majority vote of the Board. At such meeting the School Board shall organize by the election of a president and vice-president from its members. Such officers shall serve for a term of one year.

President

The president will preside at all meetings of the Board and will perform other duties as directed by law, state regulations and by this Board. In carrying out these responsibilities the president will:

1. Countersign all orders drawn by the business manager for claims approved by the Board.
2. Appoint or provide for the election of all committees, of which the president will be an ex-officio member.
3. Confer with the superintendent as may be necessary and desirable on school or related matters.
4. Preside at all regular meetings and call special meetings of the Board.
5. Be entitled to vote and discuss on all matters before the Board.
6. ~~Temporarily close any school within the district on account of contagious disease or for any other causes within the limits of the law.~~
7. Coordinate the annual review of the superintendent.
8. Perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

Vice-President

The vice-president of the Board will assume the duties and responsibilities of the president in his or her absence. The vice-president will also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.

Policy

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Watertown School District 14-4

BOARD SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Board believes that open lines of communication are vitally important in a successful Board-Superintendent relationship and that the children of the District are best served by an atmosphere of harmony based upon mutual trust and a clear understanding of policymaking and administrative roles.

The role of policy development and oversight is a major responsibility of the School Board. Delegation by the Board of its executive powers provides freedom for the superintendent to manage the schools within the established policies. The Board holds the Superintendent responsible for carrying out its policies and is accountable to the Board for results.

Policy

Adopted: 8/11/08

Reviewed: 4/25

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SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

REGULAR MEETINGS

Board business shall be conducted in open session. Regular School Board meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month, as established or otherwise designated at the annual organizational meeting of the Board. Public Notice shall be given by posting the proposed agenda in the Superintendent's Office at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. If circumstances warrant, a regular School Board meeting can be changed by majority vote of the School Board.

Subject to the following rules, any person may record, through audio or video technology, a school board meeting that is open to the public as long as the recording is reasonable, obvious, and not disruptive.

1. A person who wishes to audio or video record some or all of an official school board meeting must inform the school board president/chairperson or superintendent prior to the beginning of the meeting of the person's intent to record. At the beginning of the meeting, the school board president will then inform all persons present of the recording.
2. The quantity and type of recording equipment used shall be subject to the discretion of the school board, and the school board president/chairperson shall have the discretion to exclude or terminate recording of the meeting. This discretion is not to be exercised in an effort to restrict the public's right to be informed of school board meeting proceedings, but only where these rules have been violated.
3. Recording equipment must not produce distracting light or noise, and no artificial lighting device of any kind shall be employed with a video camera.
4. Recording equipment must not obstruct the vision of persons attending the school board meeting and their ability to see all school board members.
5. Any person violating the rules set forth above may be directed to cease the recording or leave the premises.

The School Board shall reserve at every official meeting a period for public comment, limited at the Board's discretion as to the time allowed for each topic and the total time allowed for public comment, but not so limited as to provide for no public comment. Public comment is not required at official meetings held solely for the purpose of meeting in executive session, an inauguration, swearing in of newly elected officials, or presentation of an annual report to the School Board.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the President of the Board, or in his/her absence the Vice-President, or a majority of the Board members. Notice stating the time, place and purpose of any special meeting, will be given to each Board member by District Administration in sufficient time to allow each member's presence. No business other than that stated in the notice will be conducted

at a special meeting. Local news media that have requested notice will be notified of the special meeting prior to the meeting. The twenty-four hour notice for special meetings shall be provided when circumstances permit.

TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL

Meetings, including executive sessions, may be conducted by ~~telephone~~ conference call. Members shall be deemed present if they answer present to the roll call taken over the phone. Conference calls cannot be used to conduct hearings pursuant to 1-26-4 or 1-26-8.

Policy

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