

CODE OF ETHICS FOR  
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS OF WEST VIRGINIA

- I. As a member of the Board, representing all the citizens of my county, I recognize:
- A. That my fellow citizens have entrusted me with the educational developments of the children and youth of the county.
  - B. That the public expects my 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.
  - C. That the future welfare of this county, of the state, and of the nation depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner.
  - D. That my fellow Board members and I must take the initiative in helping all the people of the county to have all the facts all the time about their schools, to the end that they will readily provide the finest possible school program, school staff, and school facilities.
  - E. That legally the authority of the Board is derived from the state which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the 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.
  - F. That I must never neglect my personal obligation to the county and my legal obligation to the state, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization; but that, beyond these, I 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.
- II. In view of the foregoing considerations, it shall be my constant endeavor:
- A. To devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a board member so that I may render effective and creditable service.
  - B. To work with my fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debate of points at issue.

- C . To base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation ; to vote my honest conviction in every case , unswayed by partisan bias of any kind ; thereafter , to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board .
- D . To remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board , and to conduct my relationships with the school staff , the local citizenry , and all media of communication on the basis of this fact .
- E . To resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a board member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school district .
- F . To 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 .
- G . To 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 employed Superintendent and his/her professional and service staff .
- H . To 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 .
- I . To support my state and national school boards associations .
- J . Finally , to strive step-by-step toward ideal conditions for most effective board service to my county , in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy .

SOURCE : Handbook for West Virginia School Board Members

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