

Policy BBF: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

Status: ADOPTED

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Board members accept the fiduciary responsibilities of holding a public office for school district governance on behalf of district residents and in accordance with the laws of Missouri and the United States.

The key principles to be observed in upholding these responsibilities are the duties of care, loyalty and public trust.

Duty of Care – Board members will be attentive to the responsibilities of their office including, but not limited to, those set out by law, board policy and board directive. They will act in good faith and in a reasonably prudent manner after due consideration of all provided information. Under the duty of care, board members will prepare for meetings by reading the provided information and contacting the superintendent for clarification. Board members will consider the ideas and opinions of administrators, advisors and other board members as well as any input received from district residents before casting a vote in meetings. Board members will effectively manage district assets, ensure quality staffing and resources, monitor district processes and demonstrate accountability for decisions.

Duty of Loyalty – Board members will place the interests of the district and its students before personal interests. In general, board members cannot use their positions of trust, confidence and inside knowledge to further their own personal interests or those of their family and friends. Board members will avoid nepotism and conflicts of interest and will take only those actions that will advance the district mission and vision.

Duty of Public Trust – Board members will act in a manner that builds and maintains the community's confidence that the board is acting legally, ethically, responsibly, transparently and in the best interest of the students and the taxpayers. Board members will avoid even the appearance of impropriety. The duty of public trust includes, but is not limited to, the obligation to follow the law, meaningfully engage the public, keep the public informed of board decisions and admit and correct mistakes. Board members will interact professionally with other board members, the superintendent, district staff and stakeholders.

No list can comprehensively capture all the decisions and actions required under the duties of care, loyalty and trust. However, a board member adhering to the requirements of the office will:

1. Remember that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the district's students.
2. Govern through board-adopted policies and follow board-adopted policies and directives.
3. Make every effort to attend all board meetings and arrive at meetings prepared to discuss the agenda items.
4. Avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof and safeguard confidential information.
5. Recognize that the board acts only as a formally convened body and that individual board members have no independent authority to speak or act on the board's behalf unless they are designated by the board to do so.
6. Delegate board policy administration and school operations to a qualified superintendent and maintain a productive professional relationship with the superintendent and district staff.
7. Make employment decisions based on applicant qualifications and benefits to the district rather than personal interest.