

POLICY: BBAA
Approved: October 26, 1970
Reviewed: December 21, 1981
Revised: October 1, 2001

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS – AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Board shall have authority only when acting as a Board legally in session. Board of Education members have no authority over school affairs as individuals. The Board shall not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instructions of the Board. The removal of board members shall be in accordance with state law.

The duties and obligations of an individual board member may be enumerated as follows:

1. To familiarize himself/herself with the state school laws, regulations of the Department of Public Instruction, the School District of Hartford Joint No. 1 policies, rules and regulations.
2. To have a general knowledge of educational aims and objectives of the system.
3. To work harmoniously with other board members as professionals without trying either to dominate the Board or neglect his/her share of the work.
4. To vote and act in the board meetings impartially for the good of the District.
5. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases and give wholehearted support to the resulting policy.
6. To represent the Board and the School District of Hartford schools to the public in such a way as to promote both interest and support.
7. To refer complaints to the proper school authorities and to abstain from individual counsel and action.

BOARD MEMBER ETHICS

As a member of my local Board of Education, representing all the citizens of my school district, I recognize:

1. That my fellow citizens have entrusted me with the educational development of the children and youth of this community.
2. 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.

3. That the future welfare of this community, of this 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.

4. That my fellow board members and I must take the initiative in helping all of the people of this community 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.

5. That legally the authority of the Board is derived from the state which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the School District and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this community for the exercise of local autonomy.

6. That I must never neglect my personal obligation to the community 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.

In view of the foregoing consideration, it shall be my constant endeavor:

1. To devote time, thought and study to the duties and responsibilities of a school board member so that I may render effective and credible service.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 basis of this fact.

5. To resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a school board member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interests of the School District.

6. 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.

7. 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 District Administrator of schools and his/her professional and non-professional staff.

8. 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.

9. To support my state and national school boards' associations.

10. Finally, to strive step by step toward ideal conditions for most effective school board service to my community in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.

11. To follow any codes of ethics established by state law.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Wis. Statutes Chapter 120, Subchapter 1
Sections 120.12 and 120.13

CROSS REFERENCE: KL, Public Complaints