

CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The individual members of the Pitt County Board of Education adopt the following Code of Ethics:

I. Community Responsibility

- A. I will 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 way of life.
- B. I will work unremittingly to help the people in my community understand the importance of public education and to willingly support the highest level of education which the community can afford.
- C. I will observe and enforce federal and state laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to education.
- D. I will seek to provide equal educational opportunity for all children regardless of ability, race, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or location of residence.
- E. I will remember always in school matters that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

II. Individual Responsibility

- A. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to run the schools, but to see that they are well run.
- B. I will not violate federal and state laws in the performance of my duties.
- C. I will direct my Board action to policy making, planning and appraisal.
- D. I will work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent.
- E. I will recognize that authority is vested with the whole Board assembled in meeting and that I have no legal status, individually, to act for or on behalf of the Board at any time.
- F. I will speak courteously and treat others respectfully when acting in my Board capacity, avoiding remarks that are slanderous, derogatory, or otherwise inappropriate.
- G. I will not place myself in a position of conflict of interest, and I shall not use my Board position for personal or partisan gain.

- H. I will comply with North Carolina General Statute 115C-50 by earning annually the required 12 hours of training.
- I. I will comply with G.S. 160A-84 by earning two hours of ethics education within 12 months of election or appointment to the board;

III. Decision-Making Responsibility

- A. I will keep myself informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information.
- B. I will attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings, committees, and assigned hearing panels and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings. If I cannot attend, I will notify the Board or Committee Chairperson and/or other designated person.
- C. I will make decisions only after a full discussion of the issues with members of the staff and Board assembled at a public meeting (or a private meeting if the law and By-Laws of this Board allow).
- D. I will render all decisions based on available facts and my independent judgment, and I will not surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
- E. I will encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and I will seek appropriate communications between the Board and students, parents, the staff and the community regarding issues to be considered by the Board.

IV. Responsibility to Superintendent and Staff

- A. I will refer complaints to the Superintendent.
- B. I will communicate to the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.
- C. I will support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and I will insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
- D. I will present criticisms of a personal nature about an individual school employee only to the Superintendent, and in private.

V. Responsibility of Confidentiality

- A. I will respect the confidentiality of student records and personnel files as required by law and School Board policy.
- B. I will respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and School Board policy.

- C. I will observe the North Carolina Open Meetings Law and conduct the affairs of the Board in an open and public manner, including complying with all applicable laws governing public records.
- D. I will observe the By-Laws of the Board in regards to closed sessions. Additionally, all closed session deliberations and voting will remain confidential.

VI. Code of Ethics Violations

Suspected Code of Ethics violations will be reported to the Board Chairperson who shall immediately investigate the allegations and take steps deemed appropriate to resolve the issue. If not resolved, the Chairperson will bring the issue to the full Board in regular session. Additionally, the legal authorities will be notified, if appropriate.

VII. Receipt & Signature

Every Board Member will receive a copy of the Code of Ethics, By-Laws 1.111 (Board Member Training and Conduct), Policy 7.002 (Prevention of Nepotism), and Policy 7.014 (Conflict of Interest), plus all subsequent revisions, and sign below acknowledging receipt and that he/she has read the said documents.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read this copy of the Code of Ethics, By-Laws 1.111 (Board Member Training and Conduct), Policy 7.002 (Prevention of Nepotism), and Policy 7.014 (Conflict of Interest).

Board Member Signature

Date

Last Revision/Adoption: Previous Revisions (March 1, 2004, March 3, 2008, November 16, 2009)

Legal References: G.S. 160A-83, 115C-36, -50

Cross References: By-Laws 1.111 (Board Member Training and Conduct), Policy 7.002 (Prevention of Nepotism) & Policy 7.014 (Conflict of Interest)