

# Wausau School District

## BYLAWS OF THE BOARD ORGANIZATION Code of Ethics

8110

School Board members are agents of public purpose and hold office for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Wisconsin and United States Constitutions, carry out impartially all applicable state and federal laws, observe in their official acts the highest ethical standards, and discharge faithfully the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest must be their prime concern. Their official conduct should be above reproach so as to foster respect for the entire school system.

A School Board member should honor the authority and high responsibility that this membership demands by:

- Being prepared and attending each Board meeting.
- Always thinking in terms of the District's Mission Statement and Shared Key Interests.
- Understanding that the role of the School Board is "policy-making," planning, evaluation, and providing the necessary resources to effectively run the District.
- Maintaining a stature that is above political pressure and partisanship.
- Recognizing responsibility as a state official to seek improvement of education throughout Wisconsin.
- Keeping abreast of current District, state, and national educational issues.
- Establishing fair and equitable terms and conditions of employment and evaluation for all school employees.

A School Board member should respect relationships of other Board members by:

- Working with the Board to establish effective Board policies by which the Superintendent of Schools can administer the schools.
- Recognizing that authority rests only with the Board in official meetings and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the Board outside of such meetings.
- Recognizing the integrity of predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
- Refusing to make statements or promises relating to a vote on any matter that must come before the Board as a whole.
- Making decisions only after all facts bearing on the question have been presented and discussed.
- Considering alternative solutions to problems when appropriate.
- Setting high expectations for the work of the Board.
- Sharing the responsibility for all Board decisions, regardless of how you voted.
- Striving for teamwork.
- Respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of "majority rule."
- Refusing to participate in secret or illegal meetings that are not officially posted and which all Board members and the public do not have the opportunity to attend.

A School Board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of Schools and District staff by:

- Striving to recruit and hire when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available as the District's Superintendent of Schools.
- Giving the Superintendent of Schools full administrative authority for properly discharging all professional duties and by also holding the Superintendent of Schools responsible for acceptable results.
- Acting upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- Having the Superintendent of Schools present at all meetings of the Board except when his/her contract and salary are under consideration.
- Referring all complaints to the proper administrative office.
- Supporting and respecting the Superintendent of Schools and other staff members, professionally and personally, so they can discharge their educational functions in a proper manner.
- Presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent of Schools.
- Knowing the ONLY form of volunteering that a Board member can perform is providing infrequent assistance at school events/programs. Examples of infrequent assistance include school carnivals, assemblies, plays, award ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, reading to students as part of Read Across America, and interviewing students for mock employment/career planning. Board members are officers of the District and are perceived differently by District employees. Volunteering regularly in schools and classrooms places undue pressure on the principal, teachers, and staff. The seeds of favoritism, influence, and pressure exist when Board members are present and when Board members want to volunteer in schools on a regular basis.

A School Board member should meet community responsibilities by:

- Encouraging ideas and opinions from students, staff, and citizens of the District, and endeavor to incorporate their views in your deliberations and decisions.
- Attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community.
- Communicating the goals and activities of the schools to the community.
- Insisting that all school business be transacted on an open and ethical basis.
- Vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the District.
- Taking no private action that will compromise the school system, the Board, or the Administration, and avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest.
- Accepting no items or services of substantial value for private benefit, or for the benefit of the Board member's immediate family or associated organizations, if offered because of one's public position.
- Accepting anything of value that could reasonably be expected to influence the Board member's vote, official action(s), or judgment.
- Accepting anything of value that could reasonably be considered a reward for official action(s).

- Respecting the confidentiality of information that is privileged.
- Obtaining the community's confidence by assuring that all efforts are being made in the best interests of students.
- Listening objectively and being respectful to constructive criticism.
- Being visible, approachable, and serve as an Ambassador to the District.
- Consistently exhibiting public behavior that reflects well upon the District.

Legal Ref: Confidentiality: WI Statutes Chapters 48, 188, 895, 938  
Conflict of Interest: WI Statutes Chapters 19, 118, 119, 175, 946  
Open Meetings Law: WI Statutes Chapter 19

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