



**FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS
FOREST LAKE, MN 55025**

March 31, 2011

AGENDA ITEM: 10.2

TOPIC: School Board Member Code of Ethics – Policy #114

BACKGROUND: This policy was updated using MSBA Model Policy 209 as a reference.

PROCESS: The School Board Policy Committee has reviewed this policy. It is now being presented to the School Board for review with the changes noted.

RECOMMENDATION: First reading of this policy.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist **the individual** school board members in ~~recognizing understanding the his or her role of individual as part of a school board members~~ and **in recognizing** the contribution that each **member** must make to develop an effective and responsible school board.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Each school board member shall follow the code of ethics stated in this policy.

A. AS A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD, I WILL:

1. ~~Listen.~~ **Attend school board meetings.**
2. **Come to the meetings prepared for discussion of the agenda items.**
3. **Listen to the opinions and views of others (including, but not limited to, other school board members, administration, staff, students, and community members).**
4. **Vote my conscience after informed discussion, unless I abstain because a conflict of interest exists.**
5. **Support the decision of the school board, even if my position concerning the issue was different.**
- 2 6. **Recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates and appreciate their work.**
3. ~~Appreciate the merit of their work.~~
- 4 7. **Be primarily motivated only by a desire to serve provide the best possible education for the pupils students of my school district.**
- 5 8. ~~Attempt to~~ **Inform myself on about the proper duties and functions of a school board member.**
6. ~~Recognize that it is my responsibility, together with other school board members, to see that the schools are properly run, not to run them myself.~~
7. ~~Work through the administration employees of the school board not over or around them.~~
8. ~~Recognize that school business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the school board.~~

B. IN PERFORMING THE PROPER FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, I WILL:

1. ~~Perform under~~ **Focus on education policies unless necessity requires otherwise policy as much as possible.**
2. ~~Function in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine as part of a policy forming body—not as an administrative officer.~~ **Remember my responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy.**
3. Consider myself a trustee of public education and do my best to protect, conserve, and advance its progress.
4. **Recognize that my responsibility, exercised through the actions of the school board as a whole, is to see that the schools are properly run – not to run them myself.**
5. **Work through the superintendent – not over or around the superintendent.**
6. **Delegate the implementation of school board decisions to the superintendent.**

C. TO MAINTAIN ~~DESIRABLE~~ RELATIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD, I WILL:

1. Respect the rights of others to have and express opinions.
2. Recognize that authority rests with the school board in legal session – not with the individual members of the school board except as authorized by law.
3. Make no disparaging remarks, in or out of school board meetings, about other members of the school board or their opinions.
4. ~~Recognize that to promise in advance of a meeting~~ **Keep an open mind about** how I will vote on any proposition ~~is to close my mind and agree not to think through other points of view which may be presented to the meeting until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.~~
5. Make decisions **by voting** in school board meetings ~~only~~ after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. ~~Delegate details of school board action to administrative employees.~~
- 7 6. Insist that ~~special~~ committees be appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the school board.

D. IN MEETING MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY COMMUNITY, I WILL:

1. Attempt to appraise **and plan for** both the present and future educational needs of the school district **and community**.
2. Attempt to obtain adequate financial support for the school **district's** programs.
- ~~3. Interpret the needs and attitudes of the community and do my best to translate them into the educational program of the school district.~~
- ~~4. Consider it an important responsibility to interpret the educational program of the school as it relates to the needs of the community.~~
- ~~5~~ 3. Insist that business transactions of the school district be ~~on an ethical;~~ **and open, and above board basis.**
4. **Strive to uphold my responsibilities and accountability to the taxpayers in my school district.**

E. IN WORKING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND STAFF, I WILL:

1. Hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school district.
2. Give the superintendent authority commensurate with his/her responsibilities.
3. Assure that the school district will be administered by the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in ~~the appointment of~~ **hiring** all employees.
5. Participate in school board action after considering the recommendation of the superintendent and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
6. ~~Expect~~ **Insist** the superintendent ~~to~~ keep the school board adequately informed at all times ~~through both oral and written reports.~~
- ~~7. Spend adequate time in school board meetings on educational policies.~~
- ~~8~~ 7. ~~Give~~ **Offer** the superintendent counsel and advice.
- ~~9~~ 8. Recognize the status of the superintendent as ~~an~~ **the chief executive officer and a non-voting** ex officio member of the school board.
- ~~10~~ 9. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or insist that they be presented in writing to the whole school board **for proper referral according to the chain of command.**

- 10. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.
- 11. Provide support for the superintendent and employees of the school district so they may perform their proper functions on a professional level.

F. IN FULFILLING MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AS A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, I WILL:

- 1. Comply with all federal, state, and local laws relating to my ~~function work~~ as a school board member ~~including all data privacy laws~~.
- 2. Comply with all school district policies as adopted by the school board.
- 3. Abide by all rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other **state and** federal ~~and state~~ agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.
- 4. ~~This policy will be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.~~ **Recognize that school district business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the school board.**
- 5. **Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using my school board position for personal gain.**
- 6. **Take no private action that will compromise the school board or administration.**
- 7. **Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.**

I have read and received a copy of this policy.

School Board Member Signature

Date

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 1 (School District Powers)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Powers)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendent)

Cross References: MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 1, School Board Member Code of Ethics

ADOPTED: 08/17/92
REVISED: 05/06/10