

## **1.1—LEGAL STATUS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

By the authority of Article 14 of the Arkansas Constitution, the General Assembly has provided that locally elected school boards will be responsible for the lawful operation and maintenance of its local schools.

While the Board has a broad range of powers and duties, its individual members only have authority when exercising their responsibilities in a legally convened meeting acting as a whole. The sole exception is when an individual member has been delegated authority to represent the Board for a specific, defined purpose. In matters such as personnel termination and grievances, student expulsions; and student suspensions initiated by the superintendent, the Board serves as a finder of fact, not unlike a jury. For this reason, the board should not be involved in or, to the extent practicable, informed of the facts or allegations of such matters prior to a board hearing on those disciplinary matters in which the Board could become involved.

It is the policy of the Fort Smith School Board that its actions will be taken with due regard for its legal responsibilities and in the belief that its actions shall be in the best interests of its students and the District as a whole.

Legal References:      A.C.A. § 6-13-620  
                                 A.C.A. § 6-17-208  
                                 A.C.A. § 6-18-507

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