

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of school Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above: (1) community responsibility; (2) responsibility to school administration; and (3) relationships to fellow Committee members.

A School Committee member in their relations with their community should:

- Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children.
- Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
- Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
- Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.
- Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times.
- Accept the office as a Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to benefit personally from their Committee activities.

A School Committee member in their relations with their school administration should:

- Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging their professional duties and hold them responsible for acceptable results.
- Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee member in their relations with his/her fellow committee members should:

- Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
- Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
- Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exist in executive sessions.

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- Not withhold information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own Committee or from members of other committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems.
- Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

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