

## **BOARD POLICY**

**Descriptive Code: BH**

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

**Date: January 25, 2011**

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The Columbia County Board of Education desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and, to that end, the board adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the board agrees that he or she will:

### **Domain I: Governance Structure**

1. Recognize that the authority of the board rests only with the board as a whole and not with individual board members and act accordingly.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the school district to the local superintendent and act accordingly.
3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.
4. Recognize that the local superintendent should serve as secretary, ex-officio to the board and should be present at all meetings of the board except when his or her contract, salary, or performance is under consideration.
5. Not undermine the authority of the local superintendent or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the local superintendent or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring, or dismissing employees.
6. Use reasonable efforts to keep the local superintendent informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the board may bring to the board.

### **Domain II: Strategic Planning**

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of the children attending schools within the school district.
2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the board and the school district.
3. Work with the board and the local superintendent to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the school district.
4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the board, and all court orders pertaining to the school district.

**Domain III: Board and Community Relations**

1. Seek regular and district communications among the board and students, staff, and the community.
2. Communicate to the board and the local superintendent expressions of public reaction to board policies and school programs.

**Domain IV: Policy Development**

1. Work with other board members to establish effective policies for the school district.
2. Make decisions on policy matters only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings.
3. Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of policies on school district programs and performance.

**Domain V: Board Meetings**

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called board meetings.
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the board agenda.
3. Work with other board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at board meetings.
4. Vote for a closed executive session of the board only when applicable law or board policy requires consideration of a matter in executive session.
5. Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions and other matters pertaining to the board and the school district during executive session of the board.
6. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school district as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.
7. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the board vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the board.

**Domain VI: Personnel**

1. Consider the employment of personnel only after receiving and considering the recommendation of the local superintendent.

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2. Support the employment of persons best qualified to serve as employees of the school district and insist on regular and impartial evaluations of school district staff.
3. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and all board policies regarding employment of family members.

**Domain VII: Financial Governance**

1. Refrain from using the position of board member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school district.

**Conduct as Board Member**

1. Devote sufficient time, thought, and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the board.
2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed education and training.
3. Communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow board members.
4. Take no private action that will compromise the board or school district administration.
5. Participate in all required training programs developed for board members by the board or the State Board of Education.
6. File annually with the local superintendent and with the State Board of Education a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

**Conflicts of Interest**

1. Announce potential conflicts of interest before board action is taken.
2. Comply with the conflicts of interest policy of the board and all applicable laws and Appendix B of the Standards document.

Upon a motion supported by a two-thirds vote, the board may choose to conduct a hearing concerning a possible violation of this Code of Ethics by a member of the board. The board member accused of violating this Code of Ethics will have 30 days' notice prior to a hearing on the matter. The accused board member may bring witnesses on his or her behalf to the hearing, and the board may elect to call witnesses to inquire into the matter. If found by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the board that the accused board member has violated this Code of Ethics, the board shall determine an appropriate sanction. A board member subject to sanction may, within thirty 30 days of such sanction vote, appeal such decision to the State Board of Education in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. A record

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of the decision of the board to sanction a board member for a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be placed in the permanent minutes of the board.

**PROCEDURE: YES**

**ADOPTED:**

**REVISED: 10/1/97, 8/10/99, 1/25/11**

**Columbia County Board of Education**