

## **Policy 209 CODE OF ETHICS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to assist the Northfield School District Board of Education members in understanding the role of individual school board members and the contribution that each 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 to the opinions and views of others including other board members, residents, business and property owners, parents/guardians/caregivers, students and employees of the Northfield School District.
2. Recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
3. Attend board and assigned committee meetings, and come prepared for discussion of the agenda items.
4. Be motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of the district.
5. Inform myself about the proper duties and functions of a board member as outlined in [Policy 203](#).
6. Vote my conscience after informed discussion, unless I abstain because a conflict of interest exists.
7. Support the decision of the board even if my position concerning the issue was different.
8. Inform myself about the proper duties and functions of a board member through Minnesota School Boards Association state-required training and other state recommended organizations.

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

1. Focus on education policy as much as possible.
2. 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 board as a whole, is to see that the schools are properly managed, not to manage them myself.
5. Work with and through the superintendent, not over or around the superintendent.
6. Delegate the implementation of board decisions to the superintendent.

#### **C. TO MAINTAIN 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 board in legal session, not with the individual members of the board except as authorized by law.
3. Make no disparaging remarks, in or out of board meetings, about other members of the board or their opinions.
4. Keep an open mind about how I will vote on any proposition until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.
5. Make decisions by voting in board meetings after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. Recognize that committees are appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the board.

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

1. Appraise and plan for both the present and future educational needs of the district and community.
2. Advocate to obtain adequate financial support for the district's programs.
3. Insist that business transactions of the district be ethical and open.
4. Strive to uphold my responsibilities and accountability to the community and district stakeholders.

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

1. Hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the district.
2. Give the superintendent authority commensurate with their responsibility.
3. Expect the superintendent to keep the board adequately informed.
4. Assure that the district will be administered by the best professional personnel available.
5. Commit to be prepared and informed for meetings.
6. Consider the recommendation of the superintendent in hiring all employees.
7. Participate in board action after considering the recommendation of the superintendent and only after the superintendent has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
8. Offer the superintendent counsel and advice.
9. Recognize the status of the superintendent as the chief executive officer and a non-voting, ex officio member of the board.
10. Respond to complaints by using the chain of responsibility as outlined in [Policy 103](#).
11. Present personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.
12. Provide support for the superintendent and the 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 work as a board member.
2. Comply with all district policies as adopted by the board.
3. Abide by all rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.
4. Recognize that district business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the board.
5. Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using my board position for personal gain.
6. Take no private action that will compromise the board or administration.
7. Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.
8. Use district-issued email for all board business to limit security and data privacy issues.

### Policy 209 Code of Ethics

Adopted: 2004; Updated: 07.01.2019; Substantive Update: 10.24.2022; Updated: 04.24.2023, 10.23.2023

#### Board of Education

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 659

Northfield, Minnesota

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 1 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (Boards of Independent School Districts)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendent)

**Cross References:** None