

Bylaws of the Board

Code of Ethics

The following statements reflect the Newtown Board of Education's commitments as Board members, both individually and collectively, as they strive to render effective and efficient service to Newtown's children, their parents, the community at large and the Newtown school and administration.

A Board of Education member should honor the high responsibility which his/her membership demands:

- By thinking always in terms of "students first".
- By understanding that the basic function of the Board members is policy-making not administration, and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions.
- By accepting the responsibility along with fellow Board members to see that the best possible facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of these schools.
- By refusing to "play politics".
- By representing at all times the entire school community.
- By accepting the responsibility to become well-informed concerning the duties of Board members and the proper functions of public schools.
- By recognizing a responsibility as an agent of the State to seek the improvement of education throughout the State.

A Board of Education member should respect his/her relationships with other members of the Board:

- By recognizing that authority rests only with the Board in official meetings, and that the individual member has no legal power to bind the Board outside such meetings.
- By recognizing the integrity of predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
- By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter which should come exclusively before the Board as a whole.
- By participating in committee work.
- By making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.
- By respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of majority rule.

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Code of Ethics (continued)

A Board of Education member should seek to maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff:

- By striving to procure, when a vacancy exists in the position, the best professional leader available for the chief administrative post.
- By giving the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties, and by also holding him/her responsible for acceptable results.
- By having the Superintendent present at all meetings of the Board except when his/her contract or salary is under consideration.
- By referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them at a regular meeting of the Board only after failure of administrative solution.
- By striving to provide adequate safeguards around the Superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can live happily and comfortably in the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis.
- By presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent.

A Board of Education Member should meet his/her responsibilities to the community:

- By attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community.
- By regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community.
- By insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical and above-Board basis.
- By vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.
- By refusing to use a position on the Board of Education in any way whatever for personal gain.
- By refraining from discussion of confidential matters outside of Board meetings.
- By justifying the community's confidence in the intention of the Board to act in the best interests of school children.

Meeting Protocol

1. To ensure that the Board's meetings are conducted with maximum effectiveness and efficiency, members will:
 - a. come to meetings adequately prepared;
 - b. identify issues of concern before the meeting, whenever possible;
 - c. speak only when recognized;
 - d. not interrupt each other during debate;

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Meeting Protocol (continued)

- e. not engage in disruptive and disrespectful side conversations;
- f. minimize unnecessary repetition;
- g. not monopolize the discussion;
- h. address the merits of the issue being discussed without appealing to the biases, prejudices and emotions of the audience;
- i. support the chair of the meeting's efforts to facilitate an orderly meeting;
- j. communicate openly and actively in discussion and dialog to avoid surprises;
- k. value equal participation of all members;
- l. practice respectful body language;
- m. listen actively when other members speak; and
- n. not surprise or embarrass each other or members of the staff.