

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

0108
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Code of Conduct

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education (Board) desires that a harmonious relationship exist between Board members themselves, and also between Board members and staff members. To this end, the Board has adopted the following Code of Conduct.

II. PURPOSE

The Board desires to illuminate the high ethical standards, core beliefs, values, and commitment of its members in conducting the business of public education in Prince George's County. The Board's policy will codify the professionalism and congeniality of its diverse members and raise the level of engagement of the Board as a whole. The purpose of this policy is to clarify acceptable conduct by the members of the Board in performing system oversight.

III. DEFINITIONS

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

A. Emergency: An emergency is:

1. A serious situation or occurrence that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate action; or
2. A condition of urgent need for action or assistance.

IV. STANDARDS

A. Each member of the Board will:

1. Function as a part of a policymaking and standards setting board rather than as part of an administrative board.
2. Work through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school system.
3. Recognize that his/her responsibility is not to run the schools, but to see that they are well run.
4. Familiarize himself or herself in a broad and non-technical manner with the operations and challenges of the school system.
5. Refer all complaints and requests to the CEO, except under extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to if the complaint is against the CEO or where legally mandated to be referred to an external agency.
6. Inform the staff of the school system, through the CEO, of prevailing attitudes, wishes, and needs of the people of the County and inform constituents/residents of the needs, challenges, and accomplishments of the school system.
7. Voice opinions responsibly and respectfully in Board meetings and vote for what, in the opinion of the Board member, is in the best interest of children and youth of the school system.
8. Recognize that the administrative staff, as delegated by the CEO, is responsible for carrying out Federal, State and local laws and regulations, as well as local school Board policy and administrative procedures.
9. Frame policies and plans by giving consideration to recommendations of the CEO and reviewing his or her reasons for making the recommendations.
10. Require oral and written reports from the CEO for the purpose of keeping the Board properly informed on school system matters.
11. Give all school officials authority commensurate with their responsibilities.
12. Maintain harmonious relations with other Board members.
13. Visit schools to gain clearer understandings of school operations without interfering in the day-to-day administration of the school system.
14. Assist in the establishment of criteria to evaluate the performance the CEO.
15. Present personal criticisms of school system employees only to the CEO.

16. Support school officials in the performance of their duties.
17. Provide the CEO with advice and recommendations on specific matters which impact the day-to-day operations, effectiveness, and performance of PGCPS.
18. Refrain from using Board membership for political, personal, or business advancement.
19. Perform the roles and responsibilities of the Board position based solely on the needs of the school system, student performance and operational effectiveness including the avoidance of subgroups designed to garner a specific result on any issue.
20. Maintain confidentiality in all personnel, student, and other matters, as needed.

B. Code of Ethics

1. The Board and CEO have integrated into the *PGCPS Equity Strategic Plan – Transformation 2026*, PGCPS’ Theory of Action which declares that the school system is to develop a district culture that fosters cultural responsiveness and a sense of collective responsibility for student success amongst teachers, students, staff, families, and communities to deepen our understanding of students’ needs and create a shared purpose for our work leading to more effective practices and increased learning.
2. Along with Board Policy 0107 (Ethics Regulations) and related policies, which govern actions of its members, school officials, and employees, the Board reaffirms its adoption of the following Code of Ethics, as recommended by the National School Boards Association and amended as needed:
 - a. “As a member of the Prince George’s County Board of Education, I am committed to improving public education and, to that end, I will—
 - 1) Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools;
 - 2) Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings or inform the Chair or the Board Office in writing, at least 24 hours beforehand, absent an emergency, if I cannot attend part or all of a regularly scheduled Board meeting.
 - 3) Recognize that I should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
 - 4) Render all decisions based on the pertinent facts, Board policies,

- administrative procedures, and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- 5) Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, school officials and all elements of the community;
 - 6) Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the CEO;
 - 7) Communicate to other Board members and the CEO expressions of public reaction to Board policies, Board decisions and school programs;
 - 8) Inform myself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs, meetings, and other relevant experiences providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state, national school boards associations, and local Board sanctioned activities;
 - 9) Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and school officials and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
 - 10) Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;
 - 11) Safeguard and be held accountable for all school system issued equipment, complying with the proper use of such equipment as required by all school system personnel pursuant to board policies and administrative procedures;
 - 12) Take no action using my position as a Board member to circumvent established Board policies and administrative procedures for securing the use of school system resources or facilities for my own, or for another individual or group's benefit;
 - 13) Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
 - 14) Be bound by Board policies and PGCPS administrative procedures; and
 - 15) If interviewed or speaking to a reporter, I will be clear that I am stating my own personal opinion and not speaking for the entire Board, unless discussing something that has been put in policy or a decision that the Board has made. In public communications, all Board members should support all official actions, policies, and positions of the Board once adopted.
 - 16) Refrain from entering into any contracts, agreements, or other legal obligations on behalf of the Board without prior approval from a vote by a majority of the Board taken at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, work sessions, emergency meetings and/or executive sessions. Any action taken by a Board Member that is contrary to this Policy shall be the sole financial obligation of that Board Member unless said action is subsequently approved a vote of a majority of the Board taken at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, work sessions, emergency meetings

and/or executive sessions.

C. Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments

1. Board members adhere to the following principles, which reflect their core beliefs and values and their commitment to work together as a Board in the best interests of the school system:
 - a. Respect individual differences and opinions and be open-minded;
 - b. Be prepared to do the work of the Board;
 - c. Support decisions of the Board and not work against those decisions;
 - d. Continually reassess the way the Board does business until a decision is made;
 - e. Disagree on issues without making it personal;
 - f. Keep confidential issues and executive session items within the confines of the Board;
 - g. Be candid in expressing opinions;
 - h. Improve communications among all Board Members;
 - i. Maintain professional decorum during Board meetings; and
 - j. Ensure all information is shared with Board members.
2. Board members shall maintain the confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal positions of the Board or the school system, especially those matters discussed in Executive Session.
3. If, for any reason, a Board member prefers not to participate in a confidential discussion that is authorized or has a conflict of interest with the subject under discussion, he or she should leave the meeting before it begins or that particular subject is discussed.
4. During its Spring Board Retreat, the Board should review and re-affirm all the principles concerning the Code of Conduct's organizational culture of respect. Given that the Board is committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of these documents and the Board's policies, the Board may take

appropriate action in the event of a member's willful and continuing violation, including but not limited to, admonishing the member, referral of the matter to the Ethics Panel for review and/or referral to the state for consideration of removal from office.

D. Removal of Board Members

With the approval of the Governor, the State Board may remove a member of the Board for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetence, or willful neglect of duty. Any Board member who misses three or more consecutive regularly scheduled Board meetings work sessions, emergency meetings, public hearings, appeals and/or executive sessions or fails to attend 25% of the Boards regular meetings during any twelve (12) consecutive month period is subject to being charged with willful neglect of duty by the Board and upon a Board vote. The Chair shall file a complaint with the State Board of Education for the member's removal. The Board member who is subject to being charged with willful neglect of duty by the Board may attend the Board meeting when the charges are being discussed and present any mitigating evidence that he/she believes is relevant, however, is not allowed to vote. If a Board member is more than thirty (30) minutes late for a regularly scheduled Board meeting, work session, emergency meeting, hearings, appeals, and/or executive session the Board member will be deemed absent for that meeting. Before removing a member, the State Board shall send the member a copy of the charges pending and give the member an opportunity within ten (10) days to request a hearing. If the member requests a hearing within the ten (10) day period, the member shall have an opportunity to be heard publicly before the State Board in the member's own defense, in person or by counsel. A member removed has the right to judicial review of the removal by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Board Chair-

1. The Chair of the Board shall notify each Board member individually in writing on a quarterly basis (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1) stating how many meetings, work sessions, emergency meetings and/or executive sessions were held in the quarter and how many meetings, work sessions, emergency meetings and/or executive sessions the member has missed.
2. Once a member of the Board has missed three (3) or more consecutive meetings, work sessions, emergency meetings and/or executive sessions or fails to attend 25% of the Boards regular meetings during any twelve (12) consecutive months period the Chair of the Board shall schedule an executive session within 30 days to take Board action consistent with this policy.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. Legal:
Educ. Art. § 3-1002;
- B. COMAR 13A.01.05.12(A) – (K)
- C. Other Board Policies:
Policy 0107 - -Ethics Regulations;
Policy 0109 - Financial Impropriety, Misconduct, and Whistleblower Protection
Policy 9270 - Actions by Individual Board Members
- D. Relevant Data Sources: Robert’s Rules of Order, Most Recent Edition
- E. Other

VII. History

Policy Adopted as 8251 09/25/75

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