

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

0108  
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

BASIC COMMITMENTS

Code of Conduct

The Board of Education 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:

Each member of the Board of Education will strive to:

1. Function as a part of a policy-making and control board rather than as part of an administrative board.
2. Work through the properly appointed administrative officers according to the organization 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 problems of the school system.
5. Refer, as far as possible, all complaints and requests to the appropriate administrative officer.
6. Try to interpret to the staff of the school system the attitudes, wishes, and needs of the people of the County and try to interpret to the people the needs, problems, and accomplishments of the school system.
7. Voice opinions responsibly in Board meetings and vote for what seems best for the children and youth of the school system.
8. Recognize fully that the appropriate administrative officer is responsible for carrying out specific policies in accordance with State laws, bylaws, and local school board policy.
9. Frame policies and plans by giving consideration to recommendations of the Superintendent and reviewing his or her reasons for making the recommendations.
10. Require oral and written reports from the staff and administration 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 efficiency of the administrative officers.
15. Present personal criticisms of school employees only to the appropriate administrative officer.
16. Support school officials in the performance of their duties.
17. Give friendly advice and counsel to the Superintendent.
18. Refuse to use Board membership for political, personal or business advancement.
19. Avoid the formation of cliques to control Board action.
20. Hold confidential information as a trust.

#### Code of Ethics

In addition, the Board of Education, the Chief Executive Officer, and Prince George's County Public Schools employee organizations have adopted a compact of an organizational culture of respect. The compact is part of the school system's strategic plan, *The Promise of PGCPs*. With this compact, all parties commit to an organization that recognizes and values the role of all employees as contributors to a learning community that sets high standards of performance for school officials, staff and students.

Along with the Board's Ethics Regulations and related policies, which govern actions of its Members, school officials, and employees, the Board has also adopted the following Code of Ethics, as recommended by the National School Boards Association and amended as needed:

“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;
- 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 Chief Executive Officer of Schools;
- 7) Communicate to other Board Members and the Chief Executive Officer 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 policies and 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; and
- 14) Be bound by PGCPs policies and procedures.

#### Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments

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 interest of the school system:

- 1) Respect individual differences and opinions and be open-minded;
- 2) Be prepared to do the work of the Board;
- 3) Support decisions of the Board and not work against those decisions;
- 4) Continually reassess the way the Board does business until a decision is made;
- 5) Disagree on issues without making it personal;
- 6) Keep confidential issues and executive session items within the confines of the Board;
- 7) Be candid in expressing opinions;
- 8) Improve communications among all Board Members;
- 9) Maintain professional decorum during Board meetings; and
- 10) Ensure all information is shared with Board members.

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.

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.

During its Spring Board Retreat, the Board should review and re-affirm all the principles concerning the Code of Conduct and the compact concerning the 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.

#### 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. 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 of receipt of the charges 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.

*Reference: Educ. Art. §3-1002; Board Policy 0107, "Ethics Regulations"; Board Policy 9270, "Actions by Individual Board Members", Robert's Rules of Order, Most Recent Edition*

Policy Adopted as 8251

9/25/75

Policy Amended

5/16/03

Policy Reviewed: No Revisions Required

1/14/05

Policy Reviewed – No Revisions Required

10/26/05

Policy Amended

4/29/10

Policy Amended and renumbered 0108

8/25/11

Policy Amended

3/21/17