

By-Laws

SUBJECT: BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the West Islip Board of Education will meet their obligations and responsibilities as elected and/or appointed officials in accordance with the highest standards of ethical conduct. To that end they will:

1. Observe the policies and regulations of the district and the laws, regulations, rules governing education in New York State.
2. Remember that their first and foremost responsibility is the educational welfare of district students and will focus their efforts on that mission instead of their personal goals.
3. Accept fiscal oversight, policymaking, planning and evaluation of the Superintendent as the Board's primary role in accomplishing the district's mission and protecting the public interest.
4. Make a conscious and deliberate effort to avoid crossing from governance to administration.
5. Build a strong and positive working relationship with the Superintendent, while remaining objective.
6. Willingly share knowledge, opinions and recommendations on administrative matters with the Superintendent without interfering with his/her authority to administer the district.
7. Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
8. Base personal decisions and votes upon all available facts in each situation and upon honest conviction, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind.
9. Abide by the final majority decisions of the Board so long as such decisions are not illegal.
10. Recognize and accept that Board members have no legal authority outside of Board meetings and to conduct any relationship with the school staff, the local citizens and the media on the basis of this fact.
11. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
12. Not disclose confidential information regarding any matters discussed in any executive session of the Board.

SUBJECT: BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT (continued)

13. Represent without fear or favor the interests of all people served by the district, and communicate to the Board and Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board decisions and school programs and operations.
14. Work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during vigorous debate and points at issue.
15. Maintain familiarity with educational issues through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations.
16. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
17. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using their Board position for personal gain.
18. Refrain from public criticism of fellow Board members and employees of the district in a personal or derogatory fashion.
19. Exemplify high standards of personal conduct in all public appearances.
20. Refrain from using the Board's access to the public to publicize non-school-district related matters.
21. Refrain from contacting the media in their capacity as Board members, without prior approval by a majority vote of the Board.

Should a Board member fail to adhere to the standards of conduct set forth in this Code of Conduct policy, the Board of Education may adopt a resolution criticizing the actions of that Board member in accordance with opinions of the New York State Commissioner of Education and applicable law. This paragraph shall not be construed as, in any way, affecting the rights of individuals or the Board of Education to pursue additional or other relief, remedies or actions pursuant to New York State Education Law or other applicable State or Federal laws, rules or regulations.