Policy Code: 2120 Code of Ethics and Responsibilities for School Board Members

The Wake County Board of Education recognizes that, collectively and individually, all members of the Board must adhere to a code as required by G.S. 160A-86 and G.S. 115C-47(57). It is important that a Board member is nonpartisan in dealing with school matters and that he/she not subordinate the education of children and youth to any partisan principle, group, interest, or personal ambition. Each member of the Board shall commit to the code set forth in this policy:

A. **Board Member Ethical Requirements**

The following standards will guide each Board member in the performance of his or her official duties:

1. obey all applicable state and federal laws regarding official actions taken as a Board member;
2. uphold the integrity and independence of the Board member's office;
3. avoid impropriety in the exercise of the Board's and Board member's official duties;
4. perform faithfully the duties of the office; and
5. conduct the affairs of the Board in an open and public manner, complying with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records.

B. **Specific Board Member Commitments**

Each member of the Board commits to be an advocate for the Wake County Public School System and to do the following:

1. attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. endeavor to make policy decisions while always keeping in mind the objective of providing students the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
3. render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
4. model civility and integrity to students, employees, and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all Board members, engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow Board members on matters being considered by the Board, and complying with all applicable

Board policies;

5. respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in closed session;
6. work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent;
7. communicate to other Board members and the superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
8. learn about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the state and national school boards associations;
9. comply with North Carolina General Statute 115C-50 by earning the required 12 hours of training every two years;
10. comply with G.S. 160A-87 by earning two hours of ethics education within 12 months of election or appointment to the Board, and again during every calendar year of the term served.

    Ethics education may be provided by the North Carolina League of Municipalities, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, North Carolina School Boards Association, the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Board attorney, or other qualified sources as determined by the Board Chair or the Board.

11. support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school employees and avoid allowing personal relationships and biases to influence decision making;
12. comply with Board policy on complaints and grievances, refer complainant to the superintendent or designee, and refrain from taking individual action with regard to such complaints
13. avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using the Board member's position on the Board for personal or partisan gain;
14. as stated in Board policy 2121, Board Member Conflict of Interest, refrain from participating in, deliberating on, voting on, or attempting to influence any person with respect to any personnel matter or issue pertaining to any immediate family member's employment with Wake County Public Schools. including but not limited to hiring, transferring, promoting, demoting, suspending, disciplining, conducting performance evaluations, or reviewing or investigating complaints of any kind. "Immediate family" means spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the

step, half, and in-law relationships.

15. take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration; and
16. remember always that a Board member's first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

All Board members are expected to sign this code of ethics and responsibilities statement upon taking the oath of office.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47(1), -47(57), -50; 160A-86, -87; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997)

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Wake County Board of Education