

Policy
Board Code of Ethics

Descriptor Code: BH

The Catoosa County Board of Education desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the board adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the board agrees that he or she will:

Domain I: Governance Structure

1. Recognize that the authority of the board rests only with the board as a whole and not with individual board members. Each board member will not act in an individual capacity or with other members when less than a quorum is present at the board meeting in question to direct, authorize or transact business of the school system, of a school, or of a particular program of either a school or the school system. This prohibition includes refraining from actions outside of school board meeting in directing the actions, inactions or duties of any employee or employees of the school system. Notwithstanding the above, each board member may engage in a conference call during a school board meeting to either cast their vote, listen and/or provide input into school business within the limits and for the reasons provided for by law, and may individually respond to a poll from the superintendent to obtain ideas or opinions on school system matters.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the school system to the local superintendent and act accordingly.
3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.
4. Recognize that the local superintendent should serve as secretary, ex-officio to the board and should be present at all meetings of the board except when his or her contract, salary or performance is under consideration.
5. Not undermine the authority of the local superintendent nor intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the local superintendent or school administration, including such functions as hiring or dismissing employees, except when those matters properly come before the board in hearings or meetings to officially deal with those subjects.
6. Not undermine the authority of the local superintendent nor intrude into responsibilities that include the function of transferring employees.
7. The board of education shall not adopt or follow any code of ethics which prevents the members of the board from discussing freely the policies and actions of the board outside of a board meeting. This shall not apply to any matter or matters discussed in executive session or which are exempt from disclosure under Code Section 50-18-72.
8. Abide by all decisions of the Board.

Domain II: Strategic Planning

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of children attending schools within the school system.
2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the board and the school system.
3. Work with the board and the local superintendent to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the school system.

4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups. A board member shall not trade votes [e.g., vote "for" or "against" a motion(s) or resolution(s)] because another member has or will vote or agree to vote for or against another motion(s) or resolution(s).]

5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the local board and all court orders pertaining to the school system.

Domain III: Board and Community Relations

1. Seek regular and systemic communications among the board and students, staff and the community.

2. Communicate to the board and the local superintendent expressions of public reaction to board policies and school programs.

Domain IV: Policy Development

1. Work with other board members to establish effective policies for the school system.

2. Make decisions on policy matters only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings.

3. Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of policies on school system programs and performance.

Domain V: Board Meetings

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called board meetings.

2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the board agenda.

3. Work with other board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at board meetings.

4. Vote for a closed executive session of the board only when applicable law or board policy requires or allows for consideration of a matter in executive session.

5. Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions and other matters pertaining to the board and the school system, during executive session of the board.

6. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school system as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.

7. Let their views be known if they so desire, but not form or express opinions concerning how they will vote in or to the public before votes are cast, but after the board vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the board.

Domain VI: Personnel

1. Consider the employment of personnel only after receiving and considering the recommendation of the local superintendent.

2. Support the employment of persons best qualified to serve as employees of the school system and insist on regular and impartial evaluations of school system staff.

3. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and all board policies regarding employment of family members.

Domain VII: Financial Governance

1. Refrain from using the position of Board member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school system.

Conduct as Board Member

1. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a board member.

2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed education and training.

3. Refrain from disparaging or disrespectful remarks about another board member, and communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow board members.

4. Take no private action that will compromise the board or school system administration.

5. Participate in all required training programs developed for board members by the board or the State Board of Education.

6. File annually with the local superintendent and with the State Board of Education a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

Conflicts of Interest

1. Announce potential conflicts of interest before board action is taken.

2. Comply with the conflicts of interest policy being adopted by this board, as well as all applicable laws.

Upon a motion supported by at least 2/3 of the members of the board, the board may choose to conduct a hearing concerning a possible violation of this Code of Ethics by a member of the board. The board member accused of violating this Code of Ethics is entitled to have at least 30 day advance notice of a hearing on the matter. The accused board member may bring witnesses on his or her behalf to the hearing, and the board may elect to call witnesses to inquire into the matter. If found by a vote of at least 2/3 of the members of the board that the accused board member has violated this Code of Ethics, the board shall determine an appropriate sanction. A board member subject to sanction may, within thirty (30) days of such sanction vote, appeal such decision to the State Board of Education in accordance with any rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. A record of the decision of the board to sanction a board member for a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be placed in the permanent minutes of the board.

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State Reference

Description

O.C.G.A 20-02-0049

[Standards for local board of education members](#)

O.C.G.A 20-02-0051

[Election of LBOE members; persons ineligible to be member or superintendent; ineligibility for LBOE or other elective office](#)

O.C.G.A 20-02-0063

[Prohibit certain conflicts of interest of board members](#)

O.C.G.A 20-02-0072

[Code of ethics for local board of education members](#)

O.C.G.A 20-02-0073

[Removal of board members upon potential loss of accreditation; turnaround schools; prohibition on use of public funds for litigation expenses](#)

Rule 160-4-9-.06

[Charter Authorizers, Financing, Management, and Governance Training](#)

Rule 160-5-1-.36

[Local School Board Governance](#)