

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of school committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a school committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws that apply to school committees, since school committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of school committee members in addition to that implied above: 1) community responsibility; 2) responsibility to school administration; and 3) relationships to fellow committee members.

A school committee member in his relations with his community should:

1. Realize that his primary responsibility is to the children
2. Recognize that his basic function is to be policy making and not administrative
3. Remember that he is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a committee member on both a local and a state level
5. Remember that he represents the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office of a committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics", in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from his committee activities

A school committee member in his relations with his school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies which will direct and support the administration
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration
3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his professional duties and hold him responsible for acceptable results
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail

A school committee in his relations with his fellow school committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings
2. Realize that he should not make statements or promises of how he will vote on matters that will come before the committee
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exist in executive sessions.
4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his own committee or from members of other committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems.
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

