

# **CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE NEW YORK STATE BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

Resolved, that the members of the New York State  
School Boards Association strive to uphold the  
following Code of Conduct:

**Consistent with our dedication to children, learning and community, members of the New York State School Boards Association, as representatives of the citizens of our state's school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (SOCES), hereby adopt this Code of Conduct. In so doing, we state our belief that a code of conduct promotes public confidence in the schools and advances the attainment of district goals and thus we recognize:**

- that we have been selected by our fellow citizens and entrusted with the authority and obligation to strive to provide all students of our communities and state with equal opportunity for educational excellence.
- that the future welfare of our communities, local school districts and SOCES, state and nation depend in large measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner.
- that legally the authority of the boards of education is derived from the state which ultimately sets the parameters in which school board service is conducted.
- that we must never neglect our personal obligations to our communities and our legal obligations to the state, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization; but that, beyond these, we have a moral and civic obligation to the nation which can remain strong and free only so long as public schools in the United States of America are kept free and strong.

**In view of the foregoing considerations, it shall be our endeavor as school board members and as members of the New York State School Boards Association to:**

- devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of being school board members as well as participate in training activities so that we may render effective, informed and creditable service.
- regularly attend board meetings and take action after careful study of the issues facing the board and after full discussion at such meetings.
- work with fellow school board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debate of points at issue.
- base decisions upon available facts in each situation; to base each vote upon honest conviction, unswayed by partisan bias; thereafter, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board.
- communicate concerns and public reaction to board policies and school programs to the superintendent and other board members in a professional manner. .
- remember that as individuals, school board members have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board, and that this must be reflected in all expressions with staff, the local citizenry, and the media.
- resist temptation and outside pressure to use our positions as school board members to benefit either ourselves or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of our school districts.

- agree to honor our positions and the people who elected us by maintaining high ethical standards and by not engaging in any activity which presents a conflict of interest, or an appearance of impropriety.
- publicly disclose the nature and extent of any interest we as school board members have in any proposed contract or agreement which comes before the board.
- keep confidential matters pertaining to the schools, which are either legally required to be kept confidential and/or, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
- follow the dictates of the state's Open Meetings Law.
- recognize that the primary function of a school board is to establish policies (which are in conformity with applicable law and regulations) by which the schools are to be administered, but that the administration of the educational program and the conduct of school business shall be left to the superintendent of schools and his/her staff.
- strive to procure, when the vacancy exists, the employment of a superintendent who is best qualified for the job and who represents the interests of our communities.
- strive to build and exercise a relationship with the superintendent that is constructive and positive and which enables district staff to function as effectively as possible.
- make decisions having received the recommendations of the superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- welcome and encourage active involvement by citizens, including parents and organizations in board activities regarding establishing school policy and developing future plans.
- finally, strive step by step toward ideal conditions for most effective school board service to our communities, in the spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education in a manner which serves as a role model to our students and which demonstrates that school board service is the greatest instrument for preservation and perpetuation of our