

Wheaton Warrenville District 200

# Board of Education Principles of Operation

## PREAMBLE

School board members are guardians of the public trust. Through the policies they make, Board members are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of local public education. The Board serves as the advocate for educational excellence for the community's youth and puts those interests first. The policies School Boards make dictate the standards and philosophies by which schools are run and the criteria used to judge whether they are being run well.

We affirm the unique role of public education, whereby a community collectively pools its resources for the common good of all its youth. Therefore, we will seek to uphold and improve public education. We will work together with the Superintendent to make our district as accessible and friendly to the public as possible.

### The Key RESPONSIBILITIES of the Board of Education:

- Provide educational leadership to the school community it serves.
- Create and maintain a vision and a mission for the district.
- Hire and evaluate the superintendent to whom we delegate all administrative responsibility and authority.
- Establish clear and measurable goals and evaluate outcomes.
- Adopt and evaluate policies.
- Approve and adopt the School District's annual budget.
- Involve the community in the life of the district.
- Maintain open and honest communication.

### AGREEMENTS Regarding Roles & Responsibilities

In order to enable us to execute our responsibilities in the most effective and efficient way, we agree to the following:

1. The board has one employee - the superintendent. The board and superintendent work together to fulfill their mutually complementary roles. Trust combined with open and honest communication is our intent.
2. The superintendent is accountable only to the full board of education. The relationship between the superintendent and any *individual member* of the board of education is collegial not hierarchical.
3. No board member or subset of the board of education has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the board without consent by the full board.
4. The board and the superintendent have the right to expect performance, candor and honesty from one another.
5. The board will keep its focus on student achievement while striving to reflect diverse community expectations.
6. All board members represent the entire district.
7. As the board establishes goals, it assures that there is agreement on how the goals will be measured and on the kind of data needed to monitor progress.

8. The board as a whole and each member accept responsibility for the Board process and effectiveness. The Board commits itself individually and collectively to stand by its code of conduct, to make every attempt to speak with one voice, to maintain a positive culture and orderly decision making processes, and to do its work openly. The Board will annually reaffirm the district mission, vision and core values.

**Expected BEHAVIORS:**

1. In order to maintain a positive team approach, we will:
  - a. strive to see the good in others and believe everyone has good intentions;
  - b. look for, recognize, and promote the positive contributions of each team member;
  - c. refrain from speaking negatively about the character of another team member;
  - d. seek ways to turn obstacles into opportunities;
  - e. maintain a sense of optimism and humor in working together;
  - f. strive toward increasingly high levels of statesmanship in dealing with each other, recognize and respect each other's feelings.
2. We will always display personal integrity.
3. We will clearly identify issues and discuss them in an open, honest and respectful manner. We will solve problems through a collaborative process where all viewpoints are given a fair and open voice. We will strive to have all participants support the final Board decision and actively work toward its implementation.
4. Board members and the superintendent will set examples of leadership, which encourage and promote cooperation.
5. We will respect the expertise that others bring to the organization, sincerely listen to others and seek to understand their viewpoints.
6. We will strive to work in the “Quadrant of Leadership”<sup>1</sup> by keeping a focus on our key responsibilities and refusing to get captured by the tyranny of the urgent.
7. Board communication regarding staff and operational issues will always take place through the superintendent.
8. We will respect the confidentiality of the executive session.
9. We will always make judgments on objective behavior not on perceived motives.
10. We will use language in board discussions that articulates and thereby reinforces commitment to our mission, vision and core values.
11. We will evaluate each major decision in light of our mission, vision and core values.
12. We will focus on the future, not the past.

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<sup>1</sup> *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey, pgs. 150-155