

ULSTER COUNTY BOCES

School Board Member Ethics

POLICY # 2160

- I. Members of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services representing citizens of the component school districts, recognize:
 1. that fellow citizens have entrusted them with the educational development of the children and youth of this community;
 2. that the public expects their first and greatest concern to be in the best interest of each and every one of these young people without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be;
 3. that the future welfare of this county, of this state, and of the nation depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education provided by the public schools to fit the needs of every learner;
 4. that board members must take the initiative in helping all the people of this county to have all the facts all the time about their schools, to the end that they will readily provide the finest possible BOCES program, staff, and facilities;
 5. that legally the authority of the Board is derived from the state which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the school districts and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this county for the exercise of local autonomy; and
 6. that they must never neglect their personal obligation to the county and their legal obligation to the state, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization; but that, beyond these, they 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.
- II. In view of the foregoing consideration, it shall be the constant endeavor of the Board members:
 1. to devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a BOCES board member so that they may render effective and creditable service;

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2. to work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debates of points at issue;
3. to base personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation; to vote their honest convictions in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; thereafter, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board;
4. to remember at all times that as individuals they have no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board, and to conduct their relationships with the school staff, the local citizenry, and all media on the basis of this fact;
5. to resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as a BOCES board member to benefit either oneself or any individual or agency apart from the total interest of the component school district;
6. to recognize that it is as important for the Board to understand and evaluate the educational program of BOCES as it is to plan for the business of the BOCES operation;
7. to bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the Board is to establish policies by which the BOCES is to be administered, but that the administration of the educational program and the conduct of school business shall be left to the employed District Superintendent and his/her staff;
8. to welcome and encourage dialogue with citizens, organizational representatives and the media in the county with respect to establishing policy on current BOCES operation and proposed future development;
9. to support State and National School Boards Associations; and finally,
10. to strive step by step toward ideal conditions for most effective board service in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of representative democracy.

Approved: June 21, 1990