

BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Because all powers of the board lie in its action as a group, individual Board members exercise their authority over district affairs only as they vote to take action at a legal meeting of the board.

In other instances, an individual Board member, including the Board President, shall have power only when the Board, by vote or Board policy, has delegated authority to him or her.

The member's own interest and desire to serve the community through membership on the board continues even when the Board is not in session. The public has the right to expect a Board member to be able to discuss school matters with understanding. However, the public and district staff must be made aware that only the board has authority to take action. The Board is not bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual Board member.

As representatives of all citizens of the South Shore School District, school board members are responsible for serving the best interest of the community and its students. The oath of office requires school board members to uphold the laws and constitution of the United States and the State of Wisconsin. In addition, individual school board members should:

- a. Recognize that they may act only when in official Board session, except when specifically authorized by the Board.
- b. Attend all meetings and be prepared at those meetings to act on issues before the Board. They should be prepared to contribute to the discussion, while keeping an open mind during the deliberations; respect the right of others to have and express opinions; treat school personnel and citizenry fairly and ethically; make decisions at Board meetings after all the facts have been presented; and try to assure democratic processes for all groups.
- c. Give the district administrator authority as befits his/her responsibilities, and assure him/her of that authority through written Board policies. Board members should uphold the administrative officers in their appointed duties and consider their recommendations carefully.
- d. Avoid all conflicts of interest -- both financial and non-financial. Specifically, no Board member should:

- 1) use his/her public position for financial gain or to obtain anything of substantial value for him/herself, his/her immediate family or for an organization with which he/she is associated;
 - 2) solicit or receive anything of value pursuant to an understanding that his/her official vote, official action or inaction or judgment would be influenced;
 - 3) take any official action that substantially affects a matter in which he/she, a member of his/her family or organization with which he/she is associated has a substantial financial interest; or
 - 4) use his/her public position in a way that produces a substantial benefit - direct or indirect - for him/her, members of his/her family or an organization with which he/she is associated.
- e. Remember that they are serving as local legislators under the direction of state and federal laws. They should communicate with state and federal legislators concerning the problems and needs associated with providing a quality education.
- f. Maintain confidentiality of privileged communication.
- g. Keep informed regarding Board member duties and functions by taking advantage of in-service opportunities.
- h. Be responsive to the public by:
- 1) maintaining open communication lines with citizens in the community, and
 - 2) informing them about the educational needs of the district, the actions of the Board and the accomplishments of the district's education program.
- i. Strive to maintain harmonious working relationships with fellow Board members by accepting majority decisions graciously, stifling personal interests, assisting others to work effectively, and using tact in areas of disagreement.

- j. keep in mind the board's role as the district's employer, making sure the district has well-qualified and able employees who will serve in the best interests of the students.

LEGAL REF.:	Sections	19.41	Wisconsin Statutes
		19.59	
		946.10	
		946.12	
		946.13	

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