

In accordance with RI Gen. Laws § 16-2-9.1 the Newport School System hereby establishes a code of basic principles and ethical standards for school committee members acting individually and collectively as boards of education in the management of the public schools of Newport.

Basic Governance Principles

The Newport School Committee will govern with emphasis on organizational vision rather than interpersonal issues of the Committee; encourage diversity in viewpoints; focus on strategic leadership rather than administrative detail; observe clear distinction between Committee and Superintendent roles; make collective rather than individual decisions; exhibit future orientation rather than past or present and govern proactively rather than reactively.

Accordingly:

- ◆ The School Committee will cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Committee will work in partnership with the Superintendent, staff, students, parents, and the community. The Committee, not the Superintendent or staff, will be responsible for excellence in governing. The Committee will use the expertise of individual Committee members to enhance the ability of the Committee as a body, but will not substitute individual judgments for the Committee's collective values.
- ◆ The Committee will hold itself accountable for governing with excellence. This self-discipline will apply to attendance, preparation for meetings, policymaking principles, respect for roles, and ensuring the continuity of governance capability.
- ◆ The Committee will direct and inspire the district through the careful establishment of written policies reflecting the Committee's values and perspectives. The Committee's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term benefits for students, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those benefits.
- ◆ Continuous Committee development will include orientation of new members in the Committee's governance process and periodic Committee discussion and evaluation of process to assure continued improvement.

- ◆ The Committee will not allow the actions of any officer, sub-committee, or individual member to hinder nor to be an excuse for not fulfilling its commitments.

The Newport School Committee accepts the obligation to operate the public schools in accordance with the fundamental principles and standards of school management, which include but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Formulate written policy for the administration of schools to be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary.
- (b) Exercise legislative, policy-making, planning and appraising functions and delegate administrative functions in the operation of schools.
- (c) Recognize their critical responsibility for selecting the superintendent, defining his or her responsibilities, and evaluating his or her performance regularly without directly engaging in administrative processes.
- (d) Accept and encourage a variety of opinions from and communication with all parts of the community.
- (e) Make public relevant institutional information in order to promote communication and understanding between the school system and the community.
- (f) Act on legislative and policy-making matters only after examining pertinent facts and considering the superintendent's recommendations.
- (g) Conduct meetings with planned and published agendas.
- (h) Encourage and promote professional growth of school staff so that quality of instruction and support services may continually be improved.
- (i) Establish and maintain procedural steps for resolving complaints and criticisms of school affairs.

Policies

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- (j) Act only through public meetings since individual board members have no authority to bind the board.
- (k) Recognize that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.
- (l) Work with other committee members to establish effective board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent.
- (m) Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using the committee position for personal gain.
- (n) Attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.

History: BA, 1978; similar to AB, 1978; AFA (also BK), 1978