CODE OF ETHICS
FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The Cleveland County Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes that, collectively and individually, all members of the Board must adhere to a code of ethics as required by G.S. 160A-86 and G.S. 115C-47(57) and work together as a body in order to improve public education. It is important that a Board member is nonpartisan in dealing with school matters and that he/she not subordinate the education of children and youth to any partisan principle, group, interest, or personal ambition. Each member of the Board shall commit to the code set forth in this policy:

A. BOARD MEMBER ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

The following standards will guide each Board member in the performance of his or her official duties:
1. obey all applicable state and federal laws regarding official actions taken as a Board member;
2. uphold the integrity and independence of the Board member’s office;
3. avoid impropriety in the exercise of the Board’s and Board member’s official duties;
4. perform faithfully the duties of the office; and
5. conduct the affairs of the Board in an open and public manner, complying with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records.

B. SPECIFIC BOARD MEMBER COMMITMENTS

Each member of the Board commits to be an advocate for the Cleveland County School System and to do the following:
1. attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. endeavor to make policy decisions while always keeping in mind the objective of providing students the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
3. render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
4. model civility to students, employees, and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all Board members and engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow Board members on matters being considered by the Board;
5. remember at all times that an individual member of the Board has no authority outside the meetings of the Board to represent the Board, except as expressly authorized by Board policy or processes set forth in Board policy, and conduct relationships with the school staff, local citizenry, and news media accordingly;
6. respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in closed session;
7. work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent;
8. communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
9. devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a school board member, the federal and state school laws, and the policies, rules and regulations of the state and local boards of education;
10. learn about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the state and national school boards associations;
11. comply with North Carolina General Statute 115C-50 by earning the required 12 hours of training every two years;
12. comply with G.S. 160A-87 by earning two hours of ethics education within 12 months of election or appointment to the Board;
13. support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school employees and avoid allowing personal relationships and biases to influence decision making;
14. refrain from investigating or attempting to resolve complaints received personally, but instead direct the complainant to follow the Board’s complaint or grievance process to resolve concerns;
15. avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using the Board member’s position on the Board for personal or partisan gain;
16. take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration;
17. not accept, directly or indirectly, gifts, monetary amounts or other items of value or any promise of favor or reward from any individual or organization that will serve to influence a decision or action of the board, officer or employee of the board, or any individual or group acting for or on behalf of the Board;
18. not let any personal or business interest interfere with the Board member’s duties as a public official;
19. bear in mind that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies 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 employed Superintendent of schools and his/her professional and support staff unless otherwise provided by law;
20. fulfill all requirements of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes and other duties and obligations imposed by law in a professional manner; and
21. remember always that a Board member’s first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

All Board members are expected to sign a Code of Ethics Statement that includes these provisions at the organizational meeting of the Board each December. A breach of this Code of Ethics by any Board member may result in disciplinary action. This action may result in sanction(s) as approved by the majority of the Cleveland County Board of Education consistent with legal standards. Neglect of official duty by a Board member may result in criminal charges pursuant to GS 14-230, punishment for which could include removal from office.


Adopted:  May 8, 2017

Replaces:  Board policy 1110, Code of Conduct for Members
School Board Member  
CODE OF ETHICS

As a member of the Cleveland County Board of Education, I will strive to improve public education and to that end I will:

1. attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. endeavor to make policy decisions while always keeping in mind the objective of providing students the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
3. render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
4. model civility to students, employees, and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all Board members and engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow Board members on matters being considered by the Board;
5. remember at all times that an individual member of the Board has no authority outside the meetings of the Board to represent the Board, except as expressly authorized by Board policy or processes set forth in Board policy, and conduct relationships with the school staff, local citizenry, and news media accordingly;
6. respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in closed session;
7. work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent;
8. communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
9. devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a school board member, the federal and state school laws, and the policies, rules and regulations of the state and local boards of education;
10. learn about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the state and national school boards associations;
11. comply with North Carolina General Statute 115C-50 by earning the required 12 hours of training every two years;
12. comply with G.S. 160A-87 by earning two hours of ethics education within 12 months of election or appointment to the Board;
13. support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school employees and avoid allowing personal relationships and biases to influence decision making;
14. refrain from investigating or attempting to resolve complaints received personally, but instead direct the complainant to follow the Board’s complaint or grievance process to resolve concerns;
15. avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using the Board member’s position on the Board for personal or partisan gain;
16. take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration;
17. not accept, directly or indirectly, gifts, monetary amounts or other items of value or any promise of favor or reward from any individual or organization that will serve to
influence a decision or action of the board, officer or employee of the board, or any individual or group acting for or on behalf of the Board;

18. not let any personal or business interest interfere with the Board member’s duties as a public official;

19. bear in mind that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies 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 employed Superintendent of schools and his/her professional and support staff unless otherwise provided by law;

20. fulfill all requirements of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes and other duties and obligations imposed by law in a professional manner; and

21. remember always that a Board member’s first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

________________________
Board Member Signature

________________________
Date