

File: B5

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

### Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state. Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to; the United States and Massachusetts constitutions; the City of Chicopee Charter; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities and open processes of government; and City ordinances and policies.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

A School Committee member in his relations with his community should:

1. Realize that his primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that his basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that he is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.
5. Remember that he represents the interest of the entire community at all times.

A School Committee member in his relations with his school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
3. Give the Superintendent full responsibility for discharging his professional duties and hold him responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee member in his relations with his fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that he should keep an open mind on how he will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.

3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems.
4. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the School Committee, boards, commissions, committees, and staff of the public.

1st reading: Reg SC Mtg 3/4/2015

2nd reading: Reg SC Mtg 3/18/2015