

School Board Member's Creed

The Governing Board recognizes the privileges and responsibilities involved in serving the community.

While sacrifice of time, convenience, and financial advantage is often required in connection with serving on the Board, this gift to the community is frankly recognized and freely given.

The members believe their primary function is to adopt policies that will conserve and advance public education, remembering always that the schools belong to the people.

Board Responsibility to Community

A Governing Board Member should honor the high responsibility which Board members demand, by:

- Thinking always in terms of "Children First."
- Understanding that the basic function of the School Board Member is "policy making" and not administrative, and by accepting the responsibility of learning to intelligently discriminate between these two functions.
- Accepting the responsibility along with fellow Board Members of seeing that the maximum facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of the schools.
- Refusing to "play politics" in either the traditional partisan or in any petty sense.
- Representing at all times the entire school community.
- Accepting the responsibility of becoming well-informed concerning the duties of Board Members and the proper functions of public schools.
- Recognizing responsibility as a state official to seek the improvement of education throughout the state.

A Governing Board member should meet his/her responsibilities to the community, by:

- Attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community
- Regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community.
- Insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis.
- Vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.
- Refusing to use the position of Board Member in any way, whatsoever, for personal gain or for personal prestige.
- Refusing to discuss personnel matters or any other confidential business of the Board outside of an official Board meeting.
- Winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interest of school children.

Board Relationship with Other Members

A Governing Board Members should respect relationship with other members of the Board, by:

- Recognizing that authority rests only with the board in office meetings, and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the Board outside of such meetings.
- Recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work.
- Refusing to make statements or promises as to how the member will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole.
- Making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.

- Respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of majority rules.
- Refusing to participate in meetings which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend.
- Refraining from attributing particular intentions to other members of the Board.

Board - Superintendent Relationship

A Governing Board Member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of schools and staff, by:

- Striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the superintendency.
- Giving the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging the Superintendent's professional duties, and by also holding the Superintendent responsible for acceptable results.
- Acting only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- Having the Superintendent present at all meetings of the Board except when the Superintendent's contract and salary are under consideration.
- Referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them only at a regular meeting after failure of administrative solution.
- Striving to provide adequate safeguards around the Superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can discharge their educational functions on a professional basis.
- Presenting personal criticism of any employee directly to the Superintendent in accordance with sound principles of personnel policies and procedures.

Manner of Communicating with the Public, Each Other, and Staff

Consistent with Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 1313 (Civility), Board members shall at all times communicate with the public, each other, and staff with respect and in civil tones. Board members shall not address the public, each other, or staff in a hostile, loud, insulting, or demeaning tone. Finally, Board members shall not treat staff in a manner that creates a hostile work environment or otherwise violates the law.

Avoiding the Appearance of Impropriety and Required Public Disclosures

Board members shall at all times avoid the appearance of impropriety. Prior to participating in a discussion or vote on a proposed contract, a Board member shall disclose in open session the nature of any relationship that he/she may have with any proposed vendor/contractor, or the agent, employee, or subcontractor of any proposed vendor/contractor that may create an appearance of impropriety. The term "vendor/contractor" is any individual, organization, corporation, sole proprietorship, partnership, nonprofit, joint venture, or association, with which it is proposed that the District contract. Disclosure shall include, but not be limited to, the amount of any campaign contributions \$500 or over received by the Board member during the campaign for their current term or contributions received during the current term, either individually or collectively.

Breaches of the Code of Ethics or other Board Policy

Background and Purpose

The Governing Board of the Pasadena Unified School District has a strong commitment to ethics. The public expects and must receive the highest standards of ethics from all of those in public service. In order to be able to enforce conformance to its ethical policies, the Governing Board must have a procedure by which it can censure its own members for violation of its policies or bylaws of the Governing Board. This Policy and Procedure is intended to provide the mechanism by which the Governing Board, acting as a whole, can discipline and punish any of its members who violate state or federal laws applicable to the District or for violation of the Board Policies or Bylaws of the Governing Board.

Policy

It is the policy of the Governing Board that all of its members shall abide by federal and state law that are applicable to members of the Governing Board, as well as to Board Policies or Bylaws. Violation of such laws, policies, or bylaws

tends to injure the good name of the District and undermine the effectiveness of the Governing Board as a whole. Such conduct is deemed to be a dereliction of duty.

Censure is a formal resolution of the Governing Board officially reprimanding one of its members. Censure is an appropriate punitive measure when the violation of law or policy is deemed by the Governing Board to be a serious offense.

In order to protect the overriding principle of freedom of speech, the Governing Board shall not impose "censure" on any of its members for the content of First Amendment expression, but may censure a member for the manner in which that expression is uttered.

Procedure

1. A request for a "censure" hearing must be submitted to the Board's legal counsel in writing by no less than two nor more than three members of the Governing Board. The request must contain the specific charge(s) on which the proposed censure is based and the written material(s) which are the basis for the charge(s).
2. A copy of the request for censure and the charge(s) shall be sent by the Board's legal counsel to all the members of the Governing Board at least five (5) business days prior the Governing Board meeting at which it will be considered. The request and charge(s) shall be agendized in accordance with the Brown Act for the meeting of the Governing Board.
3. The Governing Board shall determine that either:
 - a. Further investigation of the charges is required; or
 - b. The matter is to be set for public hearing; or
 - c. No action is required.
4. Further investigation, if required, shall be done by an ad hoc Committee appointed by the Board President. If the Board President is the subject of the request, the Committee shall be formed by the Board Vice President. If both the Board President and Vice President are the subject of the request, the Committee shall be formed by the remaining board members.
5. If the matter is set for public hearing, it must be set no sooner than the next regularly scheduled Board meeting following the Board's determination under Section 3 of these procedures in order to give the accused member adequate time to prepare a defense.

6. At the public hearing, the member of the Governing Board subject to the request shall be given the opportunity to respond to the request and to provide the Governing Board information and material(s) relevant to the charge(s). The proponents of the request may also respond to the presentation and members of the Governing Board may ask questions pertaining to the matter at hand. The member subject to the charge(s) may be represented at his or her own personal expense and may have the representative speak on his or her behalf.
7. A decision to censure requires the adoption of a Resolution making findings with regard to the specific charge(s), based on substantial evidence, and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Governing Board. The member of the Governing Board whose actions are the subject of the Resolution shall be entitled to vote on the matter. As an alternative to public censure, a written warning or written reprimand may be adopted in the same manner as public censure except by majority vote of the Governing Board.

Adopted: March 26, 1996

Revised: May 10, 2011; November 18, 2021

Pasadena Unified School District

Pasadena, California