

Chapter 1

Board of Education

1.2 Members

1.2.1 Code of Ethics

A Code of Ethics for School Board Members of Marshall County

As a member of the Board of Education, representing all the citizens of Marshall County, I should honor the high responsibility which my membership demands:

By thinking always in terms of "children first," without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be.

By understanding that the basic function of the school board members is "policy-making" and not "administrative", and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions.

By refusing to "play politics" in either the traditional partisan or in any petty sense.

By recognizing that my fellow board members and I must take the initiative in helping all the people of Marshall County to have all the facts all the time about their schools, to the end that they will readily provide the finest possible school program, school staff, and school facilities.

By accepting the fact that the legal authority of the Board is derived from the state which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the county school board and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of this county for the exercise of local autonomy.

In view of the foregoing considerations, it shall be my constant endeavor:

To insist that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis.

To remember at all times that as an individual, I have no legal authority outside the meeting of the Board, and to conduct my

relationships with the school staff, the local citizenry, and all media of communication on the basis of this fact.

To refer all complaints to the proper administrative office and to discuss them only at regular meetings or special meetings, called for that purpose after failure of administrative solution.

To base my personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation; to vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; thereafter, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.

To resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a school board member to benefit myself, individuals, or agencies, apart from the total interest of the school district.

Finally, to strive step by step toward ideal conditions for the most effective school board service to Marshall County, in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.*

- * Based primarily on the Code of Ethics for School Board Members of West Virginia as adopted by the West Virginia School Boards Association at their meeting held at Bluefield, West Virginia, April 9, 1964. With this base and the exploration of other codes, the preceding was drawn for adoption and use by the Board of Education of the County of Marshall.

1.2.2 Oath of Office

Every board member shall take the oath prescribed by Section Five, Article IV of the Constitution, before performing any of the duties of this office. The oath shall be filed with the secretary of the board.

1.2.3 Board Member Orientation and Training (Revised 09/28/94)

As a member, an individual will be responsible for:

1. Being familiar with the policy manual, school laws and other publications provided by the board;
2. Discussing the school board's responsibilities with present and past board members; gathering opinions and facts; keeping an open mind and reserving judgement;
3. Studying the minutes of the board meetings for the past year to obtain a much needed background of information about problems that the board has faced and how they were handled;
4. Discussing problems fully with the superintendent and with

- fellow board members;
5. Remembering that the work is that of a member of the entire board, representing the entire county, not certain selected geographical parts of the county, nor certain segments of the county's population;
 6. Receive annually seven clock hours of training in areas relating to boardmanship and governance effectiveness *

***NOTE:** Both the orientation and training must be approved by the State Board of Education and be conducted by the West Virginia School Boards Association or other organization or organizations approved by the state board.
Reference: W.Va. Code §18-5-1a

1.2.4 Membership in School Board Associations

While membership in school board associations is deemed desirable, it must be executed by a majority vote of the county board of education. When so voted, the board may join the West Virginia School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association, and may pay such dues as may be prescribed by the above named associations and approved by the Marshall County Board of Education.

1.2.5 Reimbursement for Expenses

Members shall be paid, upon presentation of an itemized sworn statement, for all necessary traveling expenses incurred on official business, at the order of the board.

The above provision shall also include the actual traveling expense of the board members for attending meetings of the West Virginia School Boards Association and meetings of the National School Boards Association.

1.2.6 Compensation

Board members, qualified by law, shall receive compensation at the rate of one hundred sixty dollars (\$160.00) per meeting attended. Members shall not receive pay for more than fifty meetings in any one fiscal year.

1.2.7 Authority of Members

Board members have authority only when acting as a board legally in session. The board shall not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of any individual board member, except when such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instructions by the board.

Legal Reference: W.Va. Code §18-5-4

1.2.8 Promoting School Board Effectiveness

The Board will meet at least annually with the full membership of each Local School Improvement Council which shall be defined for this purpose as a quorum of its members.

Each LSIC and Faculty Senate shall forward a copy of its approved minutes of meetings in a timely manner to the Superintendent of Schools for distribution to the Board members for informational purposes.

The county superintendent and the respective school principals shall serve as liaisons between the Board and the LSIC's to arrange joint, annual meetings at such time as to optimize the work of both groups. The specific focus of these meetings should include: the school's status relative to state accreditation standards; and school's status relative to the county and school goals.

The school goals must address in priority order:

- a. Any deficiencies relative to state or local standards
- b. Other matters of curriculum and instruction
- c. Other matters relative to programs and operations

Annually, each school shall submit to the Board via the Superintendent:

- a. State-required annual plan, including accreditation standards ratings and improvement components
- b. Assessment of status relative to each annual goal
- c. Ratings on county standards
- d. Any other valutive information the school may desire to submit

The Board will cause the county's public report card to be tendered annually to the local newspapers. The Superintendent of Schools shall release, cause to be released, or approve the release of information concerning the operation of Marshall County Schools.

Participation from members of the community is encouraged through volunteerism; committee appointments; and memberships in LSIC's, school/business partnerships, etc.

The Board will review its policy manual annually. Individual policies are subject to Board review and revision at any time.