

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board shall maintain high standards of ethical conduct for its members and adhere, collectively and individually, to the following:

1. Board members must recognize that they are responsible to all residents of the District and not solely to the constituencies that supported their election. Board members must carefully balance the advocacy of constituent needs with broader District concerns. Board members recognize that the primary duty of the Board is to represent the entire community while maintaining their independent judgment, unbiased by special interests or other politically active, narrowly focused groups.
2. Board members must understand and support the mission and philosophy of community colleges. Board members must stay well informed about the educational programs of the District and about fiscal and legal matters in order to effectively discharge their duties. They participate as leaders in making policy, supporting the college in the community, and functioning as team members.
3. Board members should confine Board action to the establishment of policy, institutional planning, overall approval and evaluation of the Superintendent/President, maintenance of the District's fiscal stability and the delegation of authority to the Superintendent/President, as the board executive.
4. Board members should hold the educational welfare of the students of the District as their primary consideration in all decisions. Consistent with the requirements of other provisions of the law, board members must assure to all students the opportunity to receive high quality education regardless of ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, race, color, ancestry, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability, or on the basis of these perceived characteristics or based on association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. Board members should communicate the Board's interest in and respect for student accomplishments by attending student ceremonies and events.
5. Board members should use appropriate channels to conduct college business. Although District employees, students, and citizens may freely express their views to Board members, board members should refrain from involving themselves in matters which they have placed under the authority of the Superintendent/President. Board members should recognize that the Board makes policy and employs the Superintendent/President to administer the policies. Board members should keep the Superintendent/President informed of all contacts with District personnel regarding college business.

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6. Board members should conduct themselves at board meetings in a manner that ensures public input, adheres to the law and spirit of the open meeting laws and regulations, and facilitates decision making in the best interests of its students, the college and community. Board members should ensure an atmosphere in which controversial issues can be presented fairly and in which the dignity of each individual is maintained.
7. Board members should promote and maintain good relations with other board members by recognizing the importance of keeping an open mind and promoting the opportunity to think through other facts and differing points of view that may be presented by others. Board members should work respectfully with other board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. Board members should respect the opinions of others and abide by the principle of majority rule.
8. Board members must recognize that the effective functioning of the Board as a whole precludes individual actions or decisions by board members in relation to District business. Individual board members may be perceived by the public as speaking or acting on behalf of the entire Board or the District as an entity. Board members must not misuse the public's perception of their power and authority. Board members must be sure that their communications with the public are perceived as expressing the opinion or position for the Board as a whole. Therefore, each member should exercise appropriate care to speak as a member of the Board and accurately represent Board policy and decisions to the community. Personal opinions should be identified as such. Board members must remember that as an individual, board members have no authority to make policy outside the meetings of the Board, and individual members will conduct their relationships with college staff, students, the public, and the media on those bases.
9. Board members must avoid situations arising from their membership on the Board which have or appear to have the potential for personal gain.
10. Board members must understand financial reports, establish priorities, and require prudent reserves and budgetary controls. Board members must ensure that public funds are spent appropriately and legally, including those that relate to their own expenses. Board members must exercise special care that their own expenses are authorized, legitimate, reasonable, and directly related to their trusteeships.
11. Board members should promote a healthy working relationship with the Superintendent/President and college personnel by respecting working relationships and responsibilities, encouraging an open, "no surprises" environment, and remaining focused on student success.

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12. Board members shall maintain in confidence the content of Closed Session communications. Such confidentiality is required by law and a breach of confidentiality may inhibit a frank discussion of topics properly considered in Closed Session. The Brown Act, Government Code Section 54950 et.seq., and other provisions of law require that the Board only act in public session, except as otherwise provided by law. Board members understand that the deliberations of the Board in Closed Session may be released or discussed in public only with Board approval. Further, board members shall recognize that information that is received in confidence or subject to a recognized privilege may only be released or discussed in public with formal board approval.

The Board of Trustees will promptly address any violation of the Board's Code of Ethics by a member or members of the Board. Violation of the Board's Code of Ethics will be addressed by the Board President, who will first discuss the violation with the board member in an effort to seek to reach a resolution. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary by the Board President, the Board President may appoint an ad hoc committee composed only of two board members to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board.

Sanctions, if deemed necessary, will be determined by the entire Board and may include a recommendation to the Board to censure the board member. All sanctions will be in accordance with state and federal laws and education codes. If the President of the Board is perceived to have violated the Code of Ethics, the Vice President of the Board is authorized to pursue resolution. Motions calling for the adoption of a censure resolution may only be brought at the Board's regularly scheduled meetings, or at a special meeting. Censure resolutions shall only be heard in public. A censure resolution shall describe in sufficient detail the conduct of said board member or members, as to allow the member or members to prepare a response to the allegations.

Reference:

- Accreditation Standard IV.C.11(2014)
- Government Code Section 54950

Administrative Regulation: None

Adopted 2/24/92

Revised 10/15/07; 4/21/20

Reviewed 12/02/14; 8/07/17; 1/31/20