

BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork, honesty, and trust among members of the Board of Education and between the Board and the administration, we, the members of the Cuyahoga Falls School District Board of Education do hereby publicly commit collectively and individually to the following code of conduct:

1. **We strongly believe that students' and children's interests are our first-priority.** The Board will represent the needs and interests of all children in our district.
2. **We believe communication between the staff, the students, the communities of Cuyahoga Falls and Silver Lake and the Board should be encouraged and that it should be aligned with board policy.** The Board recognizes that good, timely, open, and constant communication regarding District issues is extremely important.
3. **We will work to follow the chain of command.** The last stop, not the first, should be the Board. Any public or private inquiry should be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. Inquiries are to be directed to the superintendent. All personnel complaints received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent.
4. **We believe in the collective decision-making process.** Individual Board members do not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Board, unless expressly authorized by the Board. When Board members end up on the minority side of a vote, we will support the majority decision.
5. **We will exemplify the governance role.** The Board members will support the policies our district currently has in place. We will continue to study and review policies as warranted.
6. **We will endeavor to keep fellow Board members, the Superintendent, and Treasurer informed of all subjects to be addressed at Board meetings, in advance of such meetings.** We agree to ask the Board President in advance to place items of interest on the agenda instead of bringing them up unexpectedly at meetings, so as to assure orderly and well-informed discussions.
7. **We will work to achieve clearly stated goals.** The Board will establish clear goals for themselves. The Board and Superintendent will set clear goals for the district, and these will be aligned with the strategic plan and be mutually supportive.
8. **We will utilize CEO input.** The superintendent should make recommendations, proposals, or suggestions on most matters that come before the Board. We will respect his/her professional experience and opinion, and will be willing to work together with him/her on appropriate solutions when we disagree.
9. **We understand that our Board of Education acts as one body.** Individual Board members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority. We agree that individual Board members will not take unilateral action, and will not take credit or blame for Board decisions. The Board president will communicate the position/s of the Board. When Board members serve on various district or Board committees, their roles shall be defined by the Board and/or by Board policy as observers or active participants.

10. **We believe professional meeting protocol is important.** Respectful and professional conduct at board meetings is important. We agree to avoid words or actions that create an unwarranted negative impression of any individual Board of education member, guest, or of the district itself, or to utilize the media, including social media outlets to do so. We will be open- minded and listen to all speakers/presenters including turning off cell phones during meetings. We will speak only to agenda items. When necessary, we agree to disagree, and will do so with courtesy and respect for others.
11. **We will avoid marathon Board meetings.** To be efficient and effective, long Board meetings should be the exception rather than the rule. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at Board meetings should be minimal. Presenters and guests will be informed about appropriate time parameters. If a Board member has questions, needs more information or clarification, the Superintendent or Board president should be contacted before the meeting.
12. **We will practice effective decision making.** Members will become informed concerning the issues to be considered at each Board meeting, rendering all decisions based on the available facts and on individual judgment rather than succumbing to the influence of individuals or special interest groups. Board meetings are for decision-making, action, and votes, not endless discussions.
13. **We agree that executive sessions will be held for legally allowed and appropriate issues.** Executive sessions are important and necessary and will be held when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to legal ramifications of these meetings and understand that voting will not take place during executive sessions. We recognize that what is discussed in executive sessions is private and should not be disclosed to the public.
14. **We agree to respect the confidentiality of privileged information.**
15. **We will obey the laws of the State of Ohio and The United States of America.**
16. **We agree to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.** We agree to comply with the requirements of Ohio’s Ethic’s Law.
17. **We agree to improve our boardmanship by participating in professional development and studying educational issues.**