



## ***INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION***

### ***Midland Park Public Schools***

1. Board members are school officials.
2. NJ statute provides for a special Code of Ethics for board members.
3. Board members are prohibited from undertaking any employment or services, whether compensated or not, which might prejudice his/her independent judgment in official duties.
4. All members of a local Board of Education are required to file an annual financial disclosure statement.
5. Any resident of the district may file a school ethics complaint with the School Ethics Commission against a board member.
6. The School Ethics Commission may recommend penalties (reprimand, censure, suspension or removal from the board) if a board member is found to have violated the Code of Ethics.
7. When a board member leaves the board, confidential information previously disclosed through board business remains confidential and may not be spoken about publicly by the former member.
8. A board member may not address the superintendent at a board meeting regarding issues associated with the board member's children, or children of associates of the board member.
9. A Board of Education meeting is not a public meeting—it is a meeting of the Board held in public.
10. The Agenda for Board of Education meetings is developed to reasonably reflect what the Board will be discussing at the meeting.



## ***What are the legal requirements to be a member of the local Board of Education?***

1. Be able to read and write; hold U.S. Citizenship and one year's residency in the school district;
2. Be registered to vote in the district before filing the nominating petition;
3. Have no interest in any contract with, or claim against, the board;
4. Not hold office as mayor or member of the municipal governing body;
5. Not simultaneously hold two elective offices;
6. Not be disqualified from membership for the conviction of certain crimes.



## ***What are the responsibilities of members of the local Board of Education?***

School Board members are VOLUNTEERS, who should fulfill certain responsibilities, including:

1. Collaborating on the establishment of districtwide goals and the development of BOE Policies.
2. Ensuring quality education through adequate facilities and equipment; establishing a process for good faith negotiations with district employees.
3. Understand that BOE trustees do not run the schools, but work as a board to see that the schools are well run.
4. Remaining mindful that a board member has authority only when seated at a duly advertised meeting of the full Board. As an individual, in any other circumstance, a board member has no more authority than any other member of the community.



## ***What is the Executive Session and why is it held behind closed doors?***

An executive or closed door session is a meeting of the board not held in public. New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law) specifies nine areas that are to be discussed at "executive" or closed door session, including:

- Privacy issues of employees and students;
- student discipline;
- prospective or pending litigation and matters deemed as attorney-client privilege;
- labor union negotiations;
- property purchases;
- school safety and security matters.



## ***What is the Code of Ethics for Local School Board members?***

A school board member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

1. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
2. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
3. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.

4. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
5. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
6. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
7. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.
8. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
9. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
10. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

(L.2001,c.178,s.5.)