



POLICY

No. 208

MENDOCINO - LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES CODE OF ETHICS

The Board of Trustees of Mendocino-Lake Community College District consists of seven members elected (or appointed) at large but residing in specific areas and one Student Trustee elected or appointed by the Associated Student Body. Individual members perform their duties in accordance with their oaths of office and are committed to serving the educational needs of the citizens of the district, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, age or disability.

Trustees will adhere to the following principles. It is their responsibility to:

- devote time, thought and study to their duties as board members so that they may render effective and creditable service.
- work with fellow trustees in a spirit of cooperation so that all issues, especially those which are controversial are debated openly and fairly.
- base personal decisions upon all available facts, vote their honest convictions without bias, abide by and uphold the final majority decisions of the Board.
- recognize that the primary duty of the Board is to represent the entire District while maintaining independence from special interests or other politically-active, narrowly- focused groups.
- conduct business under the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act, taking official actions in public sessions, yet maintaining the confidentiality of closed session deliberations by not releasing or discussing confidential matters or information.
- recognize that, absent a financial conflict of interest, every board member has a legal duty to vote affirmatively or negatively on all action items and that as a member of a legal entity, the Board member can neither relinquish nor delegate this responsibility to any other individual or group.
- remember that as an individual, a trustee has no legal authority outside the meetings of the board, and conducts relationships with college staff, students, the local citizenry, and the media on that basis.
- confine Board action to policy determination, planning, evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the District. Delegate to and support the authority of the Superintendent/President for the execution of these items on a day-to-day basis.
- use the powers of the office honestly and constructively, communicating and promoting the needs of the community to the college, and the needs of the college to the community.

- encourage the active involvement, within the shared governance process, of students, employees and citizens of the district with respect to their recommendations on policy development and regulations, and consider others' perspectives as issues are discussed.
- enhance potential as board members by participating in educational conferences, workshops and training sessions offered by local and state organizations and be informed about the actions of the State and Federal government and the positions taken by trustee organizations on those actions.
- support the District's Mission and Vision statements by working in harmony as a board, bearing in mind public education is the most effective means by which our representative democracy is preserved and perpetuated.

Violation of the Law and/or the Board's Code of Ethics:

The Superintendent/President and Board President are authorized to consult with legal counsel when they become aware of or are informed about actual or perceived violations of pertinent laws and regulations, including but not limited to conflict of interest, open and public meetings, confidentiality of closed session information, and use of public resources. Violations of law may be referred to the District Attorney or Attorney General as provided for in law.

Violations of the Board's Code of Ethics policy will be addressed by the President of the Board, who will first discuss the violation with the Trustee to reach a resolution. If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary, the Board President may appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the matter and recommend further courses of action to the Board. Sanctions will be determined by the Board President (or committee) and may include a recommendation to the Board to censure the Trustee. Censure is an official expression of disapproval passed by the Board. If the President of the Board is perceived to have violated the code, the Vice President of the Board is authorized to pursue resolution.

If illegal or unethical behavior occurs during a Board meeting (such as remaining at the Board table when the trustee has a conflict of interest, engaging in debate or discussion with audience members on topics not on the agenda, attacking a speaker or staff member or not following the Board's meeting procedures), the President of the Board can state what the expectations and standards are of Board behavior and/or state that the behavior or violation does not meet Board policy.

Reference: Accreditation Standard IV.B.1.a, e, & h

Adopted: March 4, 1992
Revised: April 5, 2000
May 7, 2008