

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff, Students**

#### **Board-Staff Communications**

The East Granby Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain open communication between itself and the staff. Essentially, communications with staff deal with three general areas -- administration, policy and philosophy. While the Board recognizes the necessity for Board-staff communications, it also recognizes that administrative matters must be dealt with through its chief administrator. Hence, the basic line of communication for administrative matters shall be through the Superintendent.

#### **1. Staff Communications to the Board**

All formal reports to the Board or any Board committee from administrators, supervisors, teachers or other staff members shall be submitted through the Superintendent. This necessary procedure shall not be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the Board from administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the Superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Board's policy on complaints and grievances. (cf. 4135.4 and 4235.4 re Complaints/Grievances)

Staff members are encouraged to attend Board of Education meetings to observe and participate first hand in the Board's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

#### **2. Board Communication to Staff**

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the Board's problems, concerns and actions. (cf. 9020 - Public Statements)

#### **3. Visits to Schools**

Individual Board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms for personal business will make arrangements for visitations through the administrators of the various schools. The Board member will inform the administration of the purpose of their visit. Such visits shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as inspections, investigations or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Board members will be conducted only under Board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the Superintendent, building administrators and other supervisors.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff, Students (continued)

#### 4. Social Interaction

Staff and Board members share an interest in the schools and in education generally, and it is to be expected that when they meet at social affairs and other functions, they will informally discuss such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations and general school district problems. Individual Board members have no special authority except when they are convened at a legal meeting of the Board or vested with special authority by Board action. Board of Education members are expected to avoid discussion of:

- A. Matters that are, or have the potential of becoming, the subject of an executive session;
- B. Information and data contained in personnel records protected by the privacy act;
- C. Contested issues that may require final resolution by the Board.

(cf. 2220 - Representative and Deliberative Groups re staff involvement in decision making)

(cf. 5145 - Civil and Legal Rights & Responsibilities)

(cf. 9133 - Special/Advisory Committee re: staff advisory committee and student advisory committee)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board: August 18, 2003

EAST GRANBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
East Granby, Connecticut

## **Bylaws of the Board**

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#### **Conflicts in Public Education**

In the spirit of the First Amendment, we propose the following principles as civic ground rules for addressing conflicts in public education:

#### **I. THE MEANING OF CITIZENSHIP**

**Citizenship in a diverse society means living with our deepest differences and committing ourselves to work for public policies that are in the best interest of all individuals, families, communities and our nation.**

The framers of our Constitution referred to this concept of moral responsibility as civic virtue.

#### **II. PUBLIC SCHOOLS BELONG TO ALL CITIZENS**

**Public schools must model the democratic process and constitutional principles in the development of policies and curricula.**

Policy decisions by officials or governing bodies should be made only after appropriate involvement of those affected by the decision and with due consideration for the rights of those holding dissenting views.

#### **III. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public schools may not inculcate nor inhibit religion. They must be places where religion and religious conviction are treated with fairness and respect.**

Public schools uphold the First Amendment when they protect the religious liberty rights of students of all faiths or none. Schools demonstrate fairness when they ensure that the curriculum includes study about religion, where appropriate, as an important part of a complete education.

#### **IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS**

**Parents are recognized as having the primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children, including education.**

Parents who send their children to public schools delegate to public school educators some of the responsibility for their children's education. In so doing, parents acknowledge the crucial role of educators without abdicating their parental duty. Parents may also choose not to send their children to public schools and have their children educated at home or in private schools.

However, private citizens, including business leaders and others also have the right to expect public education to give students tools for living in a productive democratic society. All citizens must have a shared commitment to offer students the best possible education. Parents have a special responsibility to participate in the activity of their children's schools. Children and schools benefit greatly when parents and educators work closely together to shape school policies and practices and to ensure that public education supports the societal values of their community without undermining family values and convictions.

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#### **Conflicts in Public Education** (continued)

#### **V. CONDUCT OF PUBLIC DISPUTES**

**Civil debate, the cornerstone of a true democracy, is vital to the success of any effort to improve and reform America's public schools.**

Personal attacks, name-calling, ridicule, and similar tactics destroy the fabric of our society and undermine the educational mission of our schools. Even when our differences are deep, all parties engaged in public disputes should treat one another with civility and respect, and should strive to be accurate and fair. Through constructive dialogue we have much to learn from one another.