



BOARD POLICY

2715

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

CODE OF ETHICS/STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The Board maintains high standards of ethical conduct for its members. Members of the Board are responsible to:

- A. Devote time, thought and study to his/her/their duties as a Board Member so that effective and creditable service may be rendered.
- B. Work with fellow Board Members in a spirit of civility and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during vigorous debates of points of view.
- C. Base decisions upon all available facts in each situation, vote by honest independent conviction in every case unswayed by partisan bias, and abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.
- D. An individual Board Member has no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board to direct staff, including the Superintendent/President, and should conduct relationships with District employees, students, local citizenry, and the media on that basis.
- E. Be aware that Board Members are responsible to all citizens of the District, and not solely to those who elected them. The authority delegated to the Board by the voters must be exercised with as much care and concern for the least influential as for the most influential member of the community.
- F. Resist pressure to use the position of a Board Member to benefit personally or any other individual employee or community group or agency which diminishes the general welfare of the District. Board Members must also accurately account for expenses.
- G. Keep in mind under all circumstances that the Board is legally responsible for the effective operation of the District. Its primary function is to establish the policies by which the District is administered. The Board will hold the Superintendent/President and his/her/their staff accountable for the administration of the educational, student services, and business operations.
- H. Welcome and encourage the involvement of students, employees, and citizens with respect to establishing or modifying policy, through established channels of communications and consider their views in deliberations and decisions as a Board Member.

- I. Recognize that deliberations of the Board in closed sessions are not to be released or discussed in public without the prior majority Board approval.
- J. Take advantage of opportunities that enhance Board Members' knowledge of the community college system by attending educational workshops and training sessions offered by the state and national organization and report back to the Board.
- K. Stay informed about the issues and actions at the state and national level that may impact the District.
- L. Develop and maintain an effective relationship with the Superintendent/President by discussing, understanding, and supporting effective administrative recommendations and maintaining a working climate of "no surprises."
- M. Recognize that the day-to-day operation of the District is the responsibility of the Superintendent/President and that the Trustees are the policymaking body and overseers of the District operation
- N. Work with and respect others in the educational community through civility, decorum, and consideration.
- O. Appropriately communicate with the media. This includes not making representations on behalf of the District unless the Board has delegated authority to an individual Trustee to do so.
- P. Adhere to the District's Conflict of Interest protocol, as articulated Board Policy 2710 and Administrative Procedures 2710, 2712 and 2714, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Q. In addition to monitoring the operations of the District, it is critical for the Board to guide and evaluate institutional effectiveness, particularly educational programs, through their policy-making processes.

The Governing Board functions effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission and fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities. The Governing Board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its bylaws and expectations for best practices in board governance.

The Board will promptly address any violation by a Board member or Board members of the Code of Ethics in the following manner:

- A. Charges by any person that a Board member has violated laws and regulations governing Board behavior or the Board's Code of Ethics shall be directed to the Board Chair. If the alleged violation is by the Board Chair, the complaint shall be filed with the Vice Chair. All charges must be provided to the Board Chair or Vice Chair in writing. If the alleged behavior violates laws, the Board Chair or Vice Chair may seek the advice of legal counsel and refer violations of law to the District Attorney or Attorney General as provided for in law.

- B. The Board Chair or Vice Chair shall appoint a subcommittee to review the charges, investigate or cause to be investigated the factual basis behind any charge, determined whether any sustained findings violated this Policy, and make a report and a recommendation back to the Board in an open meeting. The Board Member subject to the charge of misconduct shall not be precluded from presenting information to the subcommittee.
- C. If the alleged violation involved pending litigation, the Board may discuss the findings of the subcommittee in closed session. The Board must report any action on the recommendations and vote in an open meeting.
- D. Based upon the findings of the subcommittee's report and recommendation, the Board may take any of the following actions:
 - 1. No Violation. Determine that the alleged misconduct did not occur or was not a violation of this Policy and that no further action should be taken.
 - 2. Corrective Action Unnecessary. Determine that a violation of this Policy occurred, but that the violating Board Member is unlikely to repeat the offense and therefore no corrective action is needed unless and until a future violation occurs.
 - 3. Warning. Find that a violation of this Policy occurred and officially warn the Board Member and specifically identify the misconduct. The warning may direct the Board Member to take specified corrective action. Failure of the violating Board Member to take such corrective action may result in a reprimand.
 - 4. Reprimand. Find that a violation of this Policy occurred and officially reprimand the Board Member and specifically identify and condemn the misconduct. The Reprimand may include direction to the violating Board Member to undertake additional training, perform restitution, or otherwise take specified corrective action. Failure of the violating Board Member to take such corrective action may result in censure.
 - 5. Censure. Find that a violation occurred and censure the Board Member. Censure not only expresses the Board's disapproval of the misconduct, but expresses the Board's disapproval of the Board Member based upon the Board Member's likelihood of continuing with ethical misconduct as a Board Member. The Censure shall be made publicly and may:
 - a. Expressly warn the District community and public that the violating Board Member has no authority to speak or act for the Board or the District, but instead is acting on his or her own.
 - b. Publicly disavow the misconduct and reaffirm that the Board finds such misconduct unethical and unacceptable and does not condone or tolerate such misconduct.

- c. To the extent the misconduct involves violation of public meeting laws, including the confidentiality of closed session meetings, take action to protect the lawfulness of Board meetings, which may include initiating appropriate legal action against the Board Member to ensure compliance with public meeting laws through the exclusion of the Board Member from closed session meetings.
- E. The action taken by the Board will be binding on the Board member charged and on the Board as a whole. The records of any actions identified in the recommendation shall be maintained by the Office of the Superintendent/President.

Reference:

ACCJC Accreditation Standard 4.6

Administrator: Superintendent/President

Executive Cabinet Review/Approval: 2/4/2025

College Planning Council – Information Item: 2/28/2025

Board Review/Approval - 1st Reading: 3/21/2025

Board Review/Approval - 2nd Reading: 4/10/2025

Next Review: 2032-2033