

**209 CODE OF ETHICS**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to assist the individual cooperative board member in understanding his or her role as part of a cooperative board and in recognizing the contribution that each member must make to develop an effective and responsible cooperative board.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Each cooperative board member shall follow the code of ethics stated in this policy.

**A. AS A MEMBER OF THE COOPERATIVE BOARD, I WILL:**

1. Attend cooperative board meetings.
2. Come to the meetings prepared for discussion of the agenda items.
3. Listen to the opinions and views of others (including, but not limited to, other cooperative board members, administration, staff, students, and community members).
4. Vote my conscience after informed discussion, unless I abstain because a conflict of interest exists.
5. Support the decision of the cooperative board, even if my position concerning the issue was different.
6. Recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates and appreciate their work.
7. Be primarily motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of my cooperative.
8. Inform myself about the proper duties and functions of a cooperative board member.

**B. IN PERFORMING THE PROPER FUNCTIONS OF A COOPERATIVE BOARD MEMBER, I WILL:**

1. Focus on education policy as much as possible.
2. Remember my responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy.
3. Consider myself a trustee of public education and do my best to protect, conserve, and advance its progress.
4. Recognize that my responsibility, exercised through the actions of the cooperative board as a whole, is to see that the schools are properly run – not to run them myself.
5. Work through the director– not over or around the director.
6. Delegate the implementation of cooperative board decisions to the director

**C. TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COOPERATIVE BOARD, I WILL:**

1. Respect the rights of others to have and express opinions.
2. Recognize that authority rests with the cooperative board in legal session – not with the individual members of the cooperative board except as authorized by law.
3. Make no disparaging remarks, in or out of cooperative board meetings, about other members of the

cooperative board or their opinions.

4. Keep an open mind about how I will vote on any proposition until the board has met and fully discussed the issue.
5. Make decisions by voting in cooperative board meetings after all sides of debatable questions have been presented.
6. Insist that committees be appointed to serve only in an advisory capacity to the cooperative board.
7. Ensure I am advocating for the needs of the cooperative as a whole and recognize that

D. IN MEETING MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY COMMUNITY, I WILL:

1. Attempt to appraise and plan for both the present and future educational needs of the cooperative and community.
2. Attempt to obtain adequate financial support for the cooperative's programs.
3. Insist that business transactions of the cooperative be ethical and open.
4. Strive to uphold my responsibilities and accountability to the taxpayers in my cooperative.
5. Uphold the expectations within SOUTHERN PLAINS Policy 110 "Governance of Southern Plains"

E. IN WORKING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND STAFF, I WILL:

1. Hold the director responsible for the administration of the cooperative.
2. Give the director authority commensurate with his or her responsibilities.
3. Assure that the cooperative will be administered by the best professional personnel available.
4. Consider the recommendation of the director in hiring all employees.
5. Participate in cooperative board action after considering the recommendation of the director and only after the director has furnished adequate information supporting the recommendation.
6. Insist the director keep the cooperative board adequately informed at all times.
7. Offer the director counsel and advice.
8. Recognize the status of the director as the chief executive officer and a non-voting, ex officio member of the cooperative board.
9. Refer all complaints to the proper administrative officer or insist that they be presented in writing to the whole cooperative board for proper referral according to the chain of command.
10. Present any personal criticisms of employees to the director.
11. Provide support for the director and employees of the cooperative so they may perform their proper functions on a professional level.

F. IN FULFILLING MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AS A COOPERATIVE BOARD MEMBER, I WILL:

1. Comply with all federal, state, and local laws relating to my work as a cooperative board member.
2. Comply with all cooperative policies as adopted by the cooperative board.
3. Abide by all rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over cooperatives.
4. Recognize that cooperative business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the

cooperative board.

5. Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using my cooperative board position for personal gain.
6. Take no private action that will compromise the cooperative board or administration.
7. Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 1 (School District Powers)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Powers)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendent)

**Cross References:** MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 1, School Board Member Code of Ethics  
Southern Plains Cooperative Board Policy 110 and 120