UINTAH RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

Board Members' Principles of Operation, Conduct, and Ethics

Purpose

The Board of Directors of Uintah River High School commits itself and its members to ethical, professional, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. In such conduct, the Board members shall fulfill the responsibilities set forth in the Oath of Office and adhere to the standards of conduct required by Title 67, Chapter 16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act. Fulfilling the duties set forth in the policy and upholding high ethical standards will prevent conflicts of interest, ensure legal and transparent governance, and preserve the faith and trust of Utah citizens in the integrity of school board oversight and governance.

Core Ethical Principles

Members of the Board of Directors of Uintah River High School pledge to be strictly bound by the following key ethical principles as outlined in Title 67, Chapter 16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act:

- Prioritizing Student Welfare: placing the educational well-being, safety, and individual needs of all students first in every policy decision, free from personal or partisan bias;
- Adherence to Utah's Open and Public Meetings Act: conducting official business in open, public meetings in accordance with state and federal open-meeting and public-records laws, while safeguarding confidential matters such as student privacy or personnel evaluations;
- Compliance with Laws: obeying all applicable state and federal laws regarding official actions taken as a board, and using only legal and ethical means when seeking to influence legislation, regulations, or rules, or regulations;
- Conservation of Tax-Payer Funds: conserving taxpayer funds and protecting public school property against misuse, waste, or abuse;
- Avoidance of Impropriety**:** acting with integrity and avoiding any actions that could be perceived as improper or unethical;
- Confidentiality: respecting the confidentiality of privileged information and understanding and acknowledging that board members will receive confidential information that cannot be shared;
- Avoiding Conflicts of Interest: avoiding any interest or activity which is, or appears to be, in conflict with the conduct of official duties;

- Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest: publicly disclosing the nature and extent of any personal interest in any proposed contract or agreement that comes before the board; recusing oneself from voting as appropriate; and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest;
- Engaging in Open and Honest Communication: communicating fairly and honestly in all dealings and discussions;
- Faithful Performance of Duties: performing the duties of the office faithfully;
- Integrity and Independence**:** upholding the integrity and independence of the board member's office and maintaining high standards of personal and professional integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fortitude in all public activities;
- Prioritizing Student Welfare: remembering that the educational welfare of students should be the primary focus;
- Professional Use of Social Media: carefully considering the board member's online presence and avoiding using social media to compromise the board or administration;
- Respect for Administration and Staff: understanding the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Director and staff and avoiding interference with their duties;
- Respect for Fellow Board Members: encouraging and respecting the free expression of opinion by fellow board members;
- Improving Public Awareness: utilizing every opportunity to improve public awareness and understanding of public schools and their role in providing essential public services;
- Refrain from Damaging Statements: Refraining from the dissemination of any malicious information concerning individuals, other associations and organizations and their members, public entities, and units of local government;
- Acknowledgement of Accountability: Acknowledging and understanding that a member of the public can file a complaint against a school board member for an alleged violation of the Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act with the Political Subdivisions Ethics Review Commission.

Professional Behavior

The Board of Directors of Uintah River High School recognizes that professionalism protects the integrity of school operations, promotes civility, supports student achievement, and clarifies the difference between governance and administration. Board members will practice the following professional behaviors as they conduct business as a board or represent the school:

- Remember and acknowledge that the first and greatest concern of a board member must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.
- Disclose all conflicts of interest annually and whenever a new conflict arises;

- Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible, having read board materials in advance of board meetings;
- Become informed about the issues to be considered at board meetings;
- Make all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- Understand that the board makes decisions as a team and that individual board members may not commit the board to any action unless so authorized by official board action;
- Recognize that decisions are made by a majority vote and the outcome should be supported by all board members;
- Acknowledge that policy decisions are a primary function of the board and should be made after full discussion at publicly held board meetings;
- Recognize that authority to administer or implement policy rests with the Executive Director and administration at the school;
- Be open, fair and honest, with no hidden agenda;
- Respect the right of other board members to have unique opinions and ideas;
- Recognize that the Executive Director is the board's advisor and should be present at all meetings, except where the Executive Director is the subject matter, or where the Executive Director's presence is a conflict of interest;
- Understand the chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the proper administrative office, while refraining from communications that may create conditions of bias if a concern ever rises to the attention of the board;
- Keep abreast of important developments in educational trends, research and practices by individual study and through participation in programs providing such information;
- Respect the right of the public to be informed about school decisions and school operations;
- Give staff the respect and consideration due to skilled, professional employees and support the employment of those best qualified to serve as school staff, while insisting on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Present personal criticism of school operations to the Executive Director or administrators, and not to school staff or at a board meeting;
- Refuse to use a position on the board for personal or family gain or prestige;
- Announce any conflicts of interest before board action is taken.

Board Member Conflicts of Interest

Board members will avoid conflicts of interest with respect to their board responsibilities and will annually or upon discovery disclose to the board their involvements with other organizations, vendors, or any associations that are or might reasonably be seen as creating a conflict.

- In compliance with Utah Code 67-16-16, Board members shall annually complete an annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement at a designated meeting of the board.
- All Board members shall disclose in writing a response to items described in Utah Code 20A11-1604-6.
- Annual disclosures will be retained by the school until the board member leaves office.
- Board Members must comply with Utah Code 67-16-6 and 67-16-7 requiring certain written disclosures to certain state and local officials if the board member:
    - is ever involved with or has significant changes to involvement with any business entity that is subject to the regulation of the school; or,
    - ever receives or agrees to receive compensation for assisting any person or business with any transaction involving the school.
- The above statements of disclosure will be retained by the school until the board member leaves office as required by these statutes.
- When the board is to decide upon an issue about which a member has a conflict of interest, that member shall withdraw without comment, not only from the vote, but also from the deliberation.
- Board members may not use their board positions to obtain employment by the school, or other advantages for themselves, family members, or close associates.
- Should a board member apply for employment at the school, the board member must first resign from the board.
- Board members may not accept or receive, directly or indirectly, a personal financial benefit, or accept any gift, token, membership, or service as a result of a school purchase entered into or anticipated in the future, from any person, firm, or corporation.

Annual Declaration of Ethical Standards

Board members will declare their commitment to abiding by ethical standards and their fitness for office by:

- Annually committing in writing to abide by a Statement of Ethical Behavior;
- Completing the annual training required by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) for board members of public schools.

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