



# Code of Ethics

The original Code of Ethics for the members of KASA was developed by a special committee approved by the KASA Board of Directors, and ratified by the KASA General Assembly on August 2, 1976. This revision was developed by the KASA Governance Committee and adopted by the KASA Board of Directors on June 19, 2012.

## Purpose of the Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators

Ethical behavior is one cornerstone of a profession. Those who are served by a profession must be assured that the members of the profession are above reproach ethically. It is the responsibility of any profession to set standards of ethical behavior and to see that they are met by its members.

The professional school administrators of Kentucky are charged individually to uphold the highest standards of professionalism in the **Code of Ethics for the Kentucky Association of School Administrators**. In addition, meeting the standards described in the Code of Ethics will assure school administrators that their actions are above reproach. The school administrator who lives up to the standards set forth in it will reap the benefits of personal and professional satisfaction, and the trust and respect of the public.

## Preface

Public education in Kentucky and throughout America rests on firm commitments to the dignity and worth of each individual; to the pre-eminence of enlightenment and reason over force and coercion; and to government by the consent of the governed. Public schools prosper to the extent they merit the confidence of the people, which is influenced to a considerable degree by the perception the people have of the character and quality of public school leaders. The result is a challenge to school administrators which can be met only by exercising the highest standards of professional leadership.

High standards of ethical behavior for the professional school administrator are essential, and are compatible with an administrator's faith in the power of public education, and commitment to leadership in the preservation and strengthening of the public schools. School administration as a profession is obligated to citizens and to the members of the profession to establish and maintain ethical policies to serve as a guide for the conduct of its members.

The policies of ethical behavior adopted by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators are based in part on the belief that the conduct of any administrator influences the attitude of the people toward the profession of school administration. They serve to measure the propriety of an administrator's behavior in relationships with colleagues, students, and the community.

The specific standards of ethical behavior for the Kentucky Association of School Administrators are based on the belief that:

- a. The effectiveness of the schools and their programs is the direct responsibility of school administrators and the total professional staff, working together with elected officials and the citizens of the community.
- b. Every act, or every failure to act, on the part of the school administrator has consequences in the school and in the lives of people.
- c. In the mind of the communities they serve, school administrators are the “face” of their schools and districts.
- d. The public entrusts both the day-by-day well-being and the long range welfare of its children and of its school system to school administrators and the board of education.
- e. The ultimate measure of a school administrator is the effort which he or she makes to improve the quality of learning opportunity for every child in every school. This includes responsibility for creating an environment that encourages maximum growth for each individual.

**The policies presented in this document should not be construed as all-inclusive. The letter of the code is to be respected, but the spirit of the code should be the measure of professional obligation for all members of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators. In addition, this Code of Ethics is to be considered as a supplement to and amplification of the Code of Ethics for Certified Employees that has been adopted by the Education Professional Standards Boards.**

## **Policies for Ethical Behavior**

More specific behavior, which illustrates but does not limit applications of the ethic policies listed here, is presented in another section entitled Commentary on the of Code of Ethics on page 3.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Policy 1</b> | <b>Professional school administrators constantly uphold the highest standards of integrity in all interactions and relations with students, colleagues, school board members, and the public.</b>  |
| <b>Policy 2</b> | <b>Professional school administrators obey local, state, and national laws; adhere to high ethical and moral standards; and express loyalty to the nation, and to the cause of democracy and liberty.</b>  |
| <b>Policy 3</b> | <b>Professional school administrators accept the responsibility throughout their career to ascertain, use, and contribute to the growing body of specialized knowledge, concepts, and skills which characterize school leadership as a profession.</b> |
| <b>Policy 4</b> | <b>Professional school administrators strive to provide the finest possible educational experiences and opportunities for all students in their school or district.</b>  |

- Policy 5** Professional school administrators seek to preserve and enhance the prestige and status of the profession in obtaining and carrying out their contractual duties as an employee.
- Policy 6** Professional school administrators carry out in good faith all policies duly adopted by the local board and the regulations of state authorities and render professional service to the best of their ability. Any desire to seek modification or renewal of policies is accomplished through legitimate and recognized means.
- Policy 7** Professional school administrators honor the public trust of their position above any economic or social rewards.
- Policy 8** Professional school administrators do not permit considerations of private gain or personal economic interests to affect the discharge of professional responsibilities.
- Policy 9** Professional school administrators recognize that the public schools are a transparent public endeavor, and they seek to keep the community fully involved with and honestly informed about its schools.

### **Commentary on the Code of Ethics**

- Policy 1** Professional school administrators constantly uphold the highest standards of integrity in all interactions and relations with students, colleagues, school board members, and the public.

School administrators:

- a. Are impartial in the execution of school policies and the enforcement of rules and regulations. It is breach of ethics to give preferential consideration to any individual or group because of the special status or position held in the school system or community.
- b. Recognize and respect the worth and dignity of each individual in all administrative procedures and leadership actions.
- c. Demonstrate professional courtesy and ethical behavior by informing a colleague in another system of the intention to consider for employment personnel from that system.
- d. Never submit official and confidential letters of appraisal for teachers or others which knowingly contain erroneous information or which knowingly fail to include pertinent data.
- e. Continuously strive to recommend those worthy of recommendation.
- f. Do not promote self at the expense of others.
- g. Refrain from making unwarranted claims, from inappropriate advertising, and from misinterpreting facts about the school system to further their own professional status.
- h. Refrain from making derogatory statements about a colleague or a school system unless compelled to do so by law or in a matter where such a professional opinion is required.

- i. Exhibit ethical behavior by counseling with staff facing professional problems and by explaining and giving reasons to individuals affected by demotions or terminations of employment.
- j. Professionally identify significant deficiencies of the staff members and provide assistance toward their correction.
- k. Make no formal criticism of any staff member to superiors or the board without having first discussed this criticism with the staff member involved.

**Policy 2            Professional school administrators obey local, state, and national laws; adhere to high ethical and moral standards; and express loyalty to the nation, and to the cause of democracy and liberty.**

- a. A legal conviction for immorality, commission of a crime involving moral turpitude or other public offense of similar magnitude shall be sufficient grounds for expelling a school administrator from membership in the Kentucky Association of School Administrators.
- b. Knowingly affiliating with organizations known to advocate the forcible overthrow of the government of the United States is evidence of unworthiness of public trust. A person who is so affiliated shall not be permitted to become or continue as a member of the KASA.
- c. School administrators, in common with other citizens, have a right and, in many instances, an obligation to express an opinion about the wisdom or justice of a given law. An opinion questioning a law, however, does not justify failure to fulfill the requirements of that law.
- d. The ideals of the profession require school administrators to resist ideological pressures that would contravene the fundamental principles of public education, or would pervert or weaken public schools, their education program, or their personnel.
- e. It is unethical to ignore or divert attention from laws which are incompatible with the best interests and purposes of the schools as a way of avoiding controversy. Rather, school administrators will take the initiative to bring about the reconsideration, revision or repeal of the statute.

**Policy 3            Professional school administrators accept the responsibility throughout their career to ascertain, use, and contribute to the growing body of specialized knowledge, concepts, and skills which characterize school leadership as a profession.**

- a. School administrators have a duty to attend conferences, seminars, and other learning activities which contribute to professional growth and development and improve their knowledge of best educational practice.
- b. It is in keeping with the highest ideals of the profession for administrators to support local, state, and national committees studying educational problems and to participate in such activities whenever and wherever possible.
- c. School administrators have a leadership responsibility for the professional growth of associates, and should encourage their attendance at appropriate professional meetings and their participation in the work of local, state, and national committees and associations.
- d. School administrators have a special obligation to contribute to the strengthening of their respective state and national professional associations.

**Policy 4            Professional school administrators strive to provide the finest possible educational experiences and opportunities for all students in their school or district.**

- a. School administrators base differentiation of educational experiences on the unique needs and abilities of students, giving no preference to factors such as social status or other discriminating considerations.
- b. School administrators have an obligation to communicate to the administrative team deficiencies in educational services or opportunities.
- c. School administrators refrain from consideration of any discriminatory criteria in the employment of personnel. They resist pressure to employ on the basis of the political, martial, or economic status of the applicant. The ability and fitness of the candidates for positions are the sole criteria for selection.

**Policy 5            Professional school administrators seek to preserve and enhance the prestige and status of the profession in obtaining and carrying out their contractual duties as an employee.**

- a. School administrators are morally committed to honor employment contracts. They refuse to enter into any new contractual agreement until any existing contract is completed to the satisfaction of all concerned.
- b. School administrators do not apply for positions indiscriminately nor knowingly apply for any position held by an administrator whose termination of employment is not a matter of record.
- c. Misrepresentations, use of political influence, pressure tactics, or undermining the professional status of a colleague are unethical practices and are in conflict with a school administrator's professional commitment.
- d. School administrators refuse to participate in activities in which established principles of professional school administration must be seriously compromised or abandoned.

**Policy 6            Professional school administrators carry out in good faith all policies duly adopted by the local board and the regulations of state authorities and render professional service to the best of their ability. Any desire to seek modification or renewal of policies is accomplished through legitimate and recognized means.**

- a. Adoption of policies not in conformity with the administrator's recommendation or beliefs is not just cause for refusal by the administrator to support and execute them.
- b. School administrators have an obligation to publicly support the school board and the instructional staff, if either is unjustly accused. They are not to become involved publicly in personal criticism of board or staff members, but are always at liberty to properly discuss differences of opinion on professional matters.
- c. Administrators who find themselves in a position where they are being called upon to violate ethical standards, should inform the board of education of the untenable position. In the event of dismissal, administrators should request adequate reasons in writing, and if they are not forthcoming or if the situation is not resolved satisfactorily, the administrator should pursue appropriate legal and organizational remedies.

**Policy 7 Professional school administrators honor the public trust of their position above any economic or social rewards.**

- a. To resist, or to fail to support, clearly desirable approaches to improving and strengthening the schools is unworthy of a professional person and constitutes unethical conduct on the part of a school administrator.
- b. School administrators have a commitment to their position of public trust to resist unethical demands by special interest or pressure groups. They steadfastly resist efforts of unscrupulous individuals to seize or exercise powers and responsibilities which are properly their own.
- c. The rank, popularity, position, or social standing of any member of the school staff should never cause school administrators to conceal, disregard, or condone unethical conduct. Any and all efforts to disregard, overlook, or cover up unethical practices should be vigorously resisted by school administrators.

**Policy 8 Professional school administrator do not permit considerations of private gain or personal economic interests to affect the discharge of professional responsibilities.**

- a. School administrators refuse to permit relationships with vendors primarily interested in selling goods and services to improperly influence their decisions.
- b. It is improper for school administrators to accept employment by any entity which publishes, manufactures, sells or in any way deals in goods or services which are or may be expected to be purchased by the school system they serve.
- c. It is improper for school administrators to be engaged in private ventures if such endeavors cause them to devote less than full- time attention to their school system.
- d. This policy in no way precludes private investment of personal funds of school administrators in ventures not influenced by their position in a given school system, provided their own professional obligations are not neglected.
- e. During the course of employment, school administrators shall have no personal interest in, nor receive any personal gain or profit from school supplies, equipment, books or other educational materials or facilities procured, dispensed, or sold to or in the school system.
- f. It is a breach of public trust for school administrators to use confidential information concerning school affairs for personal profit or to divulge such information to others who might so profit.
- g. It is inappropriate for school administrators to use unpublished materials developed in line of duty by staff members in a school system in order to produce a publication for personal profit without the expressed permission of all contributors.
- h. School administrators must be wary of using free consultative services from a commercial entity which may be a technique for promoting the sale of instructional or other materials in which that entity has a pecuniary interest.
- i. School administrators shall not publicly endorse goods or services provided for schools by commercial organizations, if such endorsement has the appearance of a conflict of interest.

- j. School administrators shall not support the appointment of any person to a position in the district if the appointment would be in violation of laws prohibiting employment of relatives.

**Policy 9            Professional school administrators recognize that the public schools are a transparent public endeavor, and they seek to keep the community fully involved with and honestly informed about its schools.**

- a. School administrators have an obligation to relate to the community, when appropriate, the work and activities of the school system, revealing both its strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- b. School administrators maintain confidences or qualified privileged communications conducted in the course of executing the affairs of the public schools. These confidences shall be revealed only as the law or courts may require or when the welfare of the school system is at stake.
- c. It is proper for school administrators to discuss confidential information with appropriate team members.
- d. School administrators consider that those with whom they deal are innocent of any disparaging accusations until valid evidence is presented to substantiate any charges made.

### **Ethical Commitments of KASA and Its Members**

Each member of the profession should have a personal and professional responsibility for upholding the KASA Code of Ethics and making it effective. In keeping with this broad responsibility, it is essential that all members of this profession feel a commitment to and assume an active role in supporting high standards of ethical conduct in school administration.

Every member of the profession has a personal responsibility to be fully informed about ethical standards and their relationships to all aspects of school administration. All school administrators have an obligation to assist members in developing such understanding.

KASA will cooperate with each affiliate in implementing standards of ethical conduct.

Aiding in the resolving of grievances between two or more members is the responsibility of KASA. Mediation services are available at no charge to KASA members in appropriate situations. The association will not be responsible for the resolving of grievances between affiliate groups or between a member and another organization.

*Adopted by KASA Board of Directors June 2012*