

BP 2715 **Board Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice & Conduct**

Reference: **Accreditation Standard 4 IV.B.1.a, e, & h; Government Code Section 54950 (Ralph M. Brown Act) § 54954.2**

Adoption Date: August 21, 2001 Updated: April 17, 2007

The Board maintains high standards of ethical conduct. Members of the Board are committed to the following Board Code of Ethics and Conduct:

I recognize that serving on the Governing Board of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District is a sacred public trust. It shall be my primary duty to provide the leadership necessary to create the highest level of educational opportunities for all community residents.

It is my further responsibility to:

1. *Attend Board meetings fully prepared to render informed decisions with consideration of the impact to students and the District's residents.*
2. *Hold confidential all discussions occurring in closed sessions of the Board.*
3. *Keep current with the Board's policies, operating rules, and statewide guidelines and priorities set by the Board of Governors. Be informed about the state and federal legislative actions and positions which affect the community college district.*
4. *Ensure the financial stability of the District by reviewing and understanding financial reports, establishing priorities, and requiring prudent reserves and budgetary controls.*
5. *Review periodically the mission, goals, and objectives of the district, and evaluate the progress of long-range plans and accreditation recommendations.*
6. *Develop and maintain good relations with fellow Board members by recognizing the importance of keeping an open mind and evaluating all facts and points of view presented; support majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes ethically. Work cooperatively with other Board members in a spirit of harmony and respect, giving courteous consideration to the opinions of all members.*
7. *Avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest.*
8. *Remember that as an individual, I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board, and I will conduct my relationships with students, district employees, local citizenry, and the media on that basis.*
9. *Recognize that a trustee is a member of a legal entity, that the strength and effectiveness of the Board is as a unit, not a group of individuals; and that majority decisions of the Board shall be abided by.*
10. *Understand that trustees have authority only when they act as a Board; individual members cannot bind the Board.*

11. *Establish and support programs, which ensure an environment that accommodates and respects the special needs of all students of the District.*
12. *Employ, support, and delegate appropriate authority to the Chancellor.*
13. *Review and evaluate the Chancellor and Board on an annual basis.*
14. *Delegate administrative authority to the Chancellor pursuant to adopted Board policies and focus Board action on planning, policy development, performance evaluations, fiscal stability of the district and other legal responsibilities.*
15. *Avail myself of opportunities to enhance my potential as a Board member through participation in educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions offered by local, state, and national organizations.*
16. *Build and maintain a professional, collegial, and cooperative relationship with all employees of the district, modeling a high standard of professionalism, collegiality, and cooperation in all interactions and promoting an environment where these values are practiced districtwide.*

Violations of the Board Code of Ethics and Conduct include:

1. **Financial Interest:** Conflicts of interest laws prohibit trustees from financially benefiting from board decisions, or acting on matters that benefit themselves or family members.
2. **Fair and Open Decision-Making:** According to the Brown Act, California's open and public meetings laws require that the public's business be done in public. Examples of violations include making decisions in private that should be made in public meetings, discussing items that have not been noticed to the public, violating provisions that closed session information shall be kept confidential, and acting on or discussing items not on the posted agenda.
3. **Use of Public Funds:** It is against the law to misuse public funds. Examples of violations include claiming expenses that were not incurred and using district or college resources for personal or political purposes.
4. **Illegal or unethical behavior during a Board meeting:** Such behaviors include remaining at the Board table when the trustee has a conflict of interest, engaging in debate or discussion with audience members on topics not on the agenda, personally attacking a speaker or a Board member or not following the Board's meeting procedures.

To ensure the Board Member's adherence to the Board Code of Ethics/~~Standards of Practice and Conduct~~, the District shall facilitate an annual Trustee Self-Evaluation by each individual trustee.

If a Trustee violates the Board Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice and Conduct, the following actions shall be taken:

1. In the event that the alleged violation constitutes a violation of the laws of the State of California, such violation shall be referred to the San Diego County District Attorney or the Attorney General of California.
2. The Board President shall talk to the person about the implications of the perceived violation, including the negative impact the behavior will have on the college, the District, the Board, and the individual trustee.
3. An ad hoc committee may be appointed to look into allegations and make a recommendation to the Board President or the Board as a whole.
4. The Board may, in a meeting, make a public statement of expected Board behavior, adopt a Board resolution about what expected behavior is, and/or publicly reaffirm the ethics policy. This course of action alerts the public that individual violations are not condoned by the Board.
5. The Board may issue a public statement in which it expresses concern with an individual trustee's behavior. The statement would be made at a Board meeting.
6. A last resort is a Board vote to censure the trustee's behavior. Censure distances the Board from the unethical behavior of one of its members and is a clear, public statement that unethical behavior is not condoned or tolerated.
7. At a Board meeting, the chair can state what expectations and standards are of Board behavior and/or state that the behavior or violation does not meet Board policy.