

Code of Ethics

for New York State Superintendents

NYSCOSS Ethics Committee

For additional information or
copies of this document, contact:

NYSCOSS

7 Elk Street, Third Floor
Albany, NY 12207-1002
Phone: 518-449-1063
Fax: 518-426-2229
www.nyscoss.org

Thomas L. Rogers, Executive Director
J. Briggs McAndrews, Superintendent in Residence
Robert N. Lowry, Deputy Director
Douglas Gerhardt, Legislative Counsel



Code of Ethics

Education is the most essential of all public services. Superintendents are the leaders of schools and stewards of these vital institutions. As role models for students and entire communities, superintendents must conduct themselves with the highest degree of professionalism and integrity.

This code of ethics, adopted by the New York State Council of School Superintendents is a public statement by school leaders for school leaders. It offers direction and guidelines for all of those working at the highest levels of school administration. It speaks to the core values of the superintendency.

The Code is not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, it offers benchmarks for action and serves as a tool to guide awareness and decision making. As with any Code of Ethics, it is not legally binding, nor does it offer formal legal advice. It is intended as a moral compass. Adhering to the Code will help maintain and build public trust and confidence in schools.

The NYSCOSS Code of Ethics for Superintendents is broken down into two categories- ethical considerations and rules of conduct. *Ethical Considerations* are broad, guiding

principles. They apply to all superintendents equally, regardless of specific circumstances. *Rules of Conduct* are transactional, more

specific to the daily functioning and circumstances facing superintendents. The Rules of Conduct dovetail the Ethical Considerations and in that way, comprise a complete, comprehensive code of conduct.

Ethical Considerations

- EC 1:** The superintendent should conduct himself/herself with the highest degree of professionalism and demonstration of respect to all members of the education community.
- EC 2:** The superintendent's actions, publicly and privately, should align with the overall mission of schools and education.
- EC 3:** The superintendent should maintain open lines of communication with all key stakeholders in the public school community.
- EC 4:** The superintendent should make the well- being of students the fundamental value of all decision-making and actions.
- EC 5:** The superintendent should fulfill professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity at all times.
- EC 6:** The superintendent should support the principle of due process and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals.
- EC 7:** The superintendent shall obey local, state and national laws and subscribe to orderly and constitutional means of social and political improvement, of the district and education as a whole.
- EC 8:** The superintendent should avoid using his/her position for personal gain through political, social, economic or other influence.
- EC 9:** The superintendent should maintain high standards and seek to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continued professional development.
- EC 10:** The superintendent should, in deed and word, foster ethical behavior and performance for all educational faculty and staff and shall adhere to the code of ethics adopted by the board of education.



David Paciencia, Chair
Adopted 2005

Rules of Conduct

1. The superintendent should impress upon all new employees the serious nature of accepting the position being offered and the need to fulfill the commitment being made.

A. The superintendent should not recruit or otherwise actively solicit employees to fulfill a position in his/her school district without the prior awareness/consent of the other district.

B. The superintendent, in upholding these rules of conduct shall adhere to the mandates of New York State Education Law including but not limited to Education Law §3019a.

2. The superintendent shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit a gift or accept or receive any gift having a value of \$75 or more. (NY Gen. Munic. Law, §805-d(1))

A. This includes gifts in any form including money, service, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality or other promise.

3. The superintendent should ensure that any position taken while serving as superintendent is not inconsistent with the mission and goals of the school district or the position of superintendent of schools.

A. The superintendent's employment contract should define the parameters and scope of any outside work to be done by the superintendent.

B. In complying with this provision, it is affirmatively recognized that working as an adjunct faculty member; being a consultant to another district; conducting superintendent searches; and serving on corporate boards are accepted forms of work consistent with that of the superintendent of schools.

C. The superintendent should accept financial honoraria consistent with the provisions of his/her contract and with applicable board policy.

4. Use of school district funds and other resources such as credit cards should be consistent with board of education policy and proper auditing practices.

A. School district issued credit cards shall not be used for personal reasons, even if charges are reimbursed.

B. Detailed records of every employee to whom a school district credit card is issued must be kept.

C. Each employee to whom a school district credit card is issued should be provided a copy of the school district policy relating to the use of such credit card(s).

5. The superintendent shall adhere to school district policies related to travel and conference attendance.

A. The superintendent should not extend stays at conferences beyond their scheduled length at the school district's expense.

B. Personal costs associated with conference attendance that are non-essential and voluntarily incurred should not be paid by the school district.

C. The superintendent should not charge the school district for costs associated with spousal travel even if such travel is reimbursed by the superintendent, unless such practice is specifically authorized by board policy.

6. The superintendent shall take an oath of office annually and every time the superintendent's contract is renewed.

A. The superintendent should not openly or publicly criticize the board of education or individual members of the board.

B. The superintendent should foster cooperation and mutual respect between and among the leadership team.

7. The superintendent should take all necessary steps to provide the board with information relating to the finances and personnel of the district and ensure confidentiality as required.

A. Adverse financial information should be immediately reported to the board of education for deliberation and action.

B. Vital information about questionable activities by school personnel should be acted on immediately.

C. The superintendent shall ensure student information and records are maintained confidentially and in full accordance with state and federal laws.

8. The superintendent should notify the board of education in writing when retiring or accepting another position.

A. Timelines of this nature should be set forth in the superintendent's contract.

B. Common practice is to provide not less than 90 days notice unless an alternative time is specifically agreed upon.



Thomas L. Rogers, Executive Director

J. Briggs McAndrews, Superintendent in Residence

Robert N. Lowry, Deputy Director

Douglas Gerhardt, Legislative Counsel