

ATLANTA BOARD OF EDUCATION STATEMENT OF VALUES

As members of the Atlanta Board of Education, we must stay true to our beliefs while recognizing that others may have conflicting beliefs. At times, compromise may be necessary. We must recognize that because of the diversity of experience and perspective that we each bring to the Board, we possess more wisdom collectively than we do individually. We also recognize the necessity for professional growth and development as a Board and as individuals and commit to regular training to increase our experience.

We recognize that the Board is part of the Atlanta Public Schools family. We must commit to communicating openly and honestly with each other, the administration, and our stakeholders. We must be willing to actively listen to each other and seriously consider alternative points of view. We must each commit to providing input -- each voice must be heard.

Even when our ideas conflict, we must treat each other with respect and courtesy and agree not to take disagreements personally. Only by operating in a system of trust can the Board truly guide the school system to world-class status.

We must never push personal agendas in our actions. Rather, our discussions, decisions and actions must focus solely on what is best for all students in the Atlanta Public Schools. We are committed to increasing the quality of teaching and learning for all -- and ALL means ALL. Our thinking and behavior must always be ethical and equitable. We must be prepared to make difficult and unpopular decisions and take risks when it is in the best interest of our students. We will model the behavior that we expect from others: basing decisions on data, acting with integrity and honesty, and listening to all voices within and outside of the school system.

We believe the Board serves the school system and the schools. We do not micromanage. We place our trust in each other and the administration to act in the best interest of our students. We readily accept our roles as ambassadors for the school system promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success. Even as we acknowledge the hard work and high level of commitment required by service on the Board, we see a place for humor and fun in our interaction and service.

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We will speak with one voice.

We will hear each opinion, but ultimately act as one. We will speak candidly and courteously to each other and listen to dissenting or different viewpoints with an open mind. Even when our ideas conflict, we must treat each other with respect and courtesy and agree not to take disagreements personally. We will help each other to “depersonalize” disagreements. Once we reach a decision or compromise as a Board, we will each support the decision in word and deed.

We will recognize a single official “voice” of the Board.

The Chair (or Vice Chair, as appropriate) will speak as the official and public “voice” of the Board.

We will be clear about, and stay true to, the role of the Board.

We will be mindful of the different roles played throughout the school system and the responsibilities associated with those roles (i.e., School Board, Superintendent, administration, staff). We will maintain a focus on policy governance. We will focus on the Board's role of policymaking and evaluation and not become involved in the day-to-day operations of the school

system. We will not engage in the resolution of problems. Rather we will refer these concerns to the Chief of Staff. We will also be mindful of the different roles we play as individuals (Board member, citizen, etc.) and act and speak only in role-appropriate ways. We will be focused in our work.

We will build trusting relationships.

We will encourage open and honest dialogue that is inclusive. We will prepare ourselves for and support each other in making difficult decisions or taking risks by maintaining a strong foundation for our actions in research and data, developing a clear understanding of the risks and benefits of each action, and sustaining a climate of trust among ourselves and with the administration.

We will be on time and prepared for meetings.

We will make every effort to be on time for Board meetings and activities. We will read all materials provided to us so we are prepared for meetings. Board members who are absent or tardy will take the initiative to find out what they missed.

We will respect all persons presenting to the Board.

We will respect staff and fellow Board members at ALL times.

We will advocate for Atlanta Public Schools and public education. We readily accept our roles as ambassadors for the school system, promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.

We will communicate positively about other Board members, staff, and the system.

We will strive to represent common interests rather than factions. We will make decisions that are best for students in all cases: ALL means ALL.

We will maintain the confidentiality of privileged information, including statements made in any executive session of the Board.

We will recognize the necessity for professional growth and development as a Board and as individuals, and commit to regular training to increase our experience.