

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MISSION-GOALS-OBJECTIVES

SERIES 0000

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For purposes of the Policy and Administrative Manual for the Hartford Public Schools, pursuant to the provisions and terms of Special Act 97-4: An Act Concerning the Hartford Public Schools, the Board of Education shall mean the State Board of Trustees.

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Philosophy of the Hartford Public Schools

The philosophy of the Hartford Public Schools is based on the conviction that the dignity and worth of each child is of primary concern and on the belief that the aim of education is to help prepare young people to assume a meaningful and productive role in school and society. To achieve this goal, which is a responsibility shared by the Board of Education, staff, students, parents, and community, we subscribe to the following tenets:

1. that our obligation is to help students mature into independent, reasoning, and responsible individuals who can adapt constructively to an ever-changing, multi-cultural world;
2. that this obligation can be accomplished by challenging students and staff to perform at their highest capabilities;
3. that students will best attain these capabilities if their unique needs, interests, strengths, weaknesses, backgrounds, learning styles, and range of scholastic and creative abilities are acknowledged;
4. that students need to develop self-esteem, an appreciation of the worth of others, a joy in learning, and a desire and willingness to achieve a standard of excellence commensurate with their abilities;
5. that students need to develop a respect for the earth's unique and diverse human and natural resources;
6. that the schools must convey to students the purpose of the educational program and help them to understand that they must share responsibility for its success;
7. that the curriculum will provide comprehensive programs and a range of instructional strategies to meet the requirements of students with varied backgrounds, abilities, aspirations, and needs, and that this curriculum will be evaluated periodically to ensure that it does so;
8. that the schools actively will seek community support and involvement through close communication and cooperation;
9. that our educational aim will best be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect, concern, and support;
10. that in the final analysis, we are all to be accountable for the present and the future success of the Public Schools.

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Ethical Practices

I. Introduction

A. Limits of Authority

The Hartford Board of Education is the unit of authority. Apart from their function as part of the unit, Board members have no individual authority. Individually, a Board member may not commit the district to any policy, act or expenditure. The Board member does not represent a factional segment for the community, but is rather a part of the body which represents and acts for the community as a whole.

No individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools, nor as an individual command the services of any school employee.

B. Methods of Operation

The Hartford Board of Education shall concern itself only with broad questions of policy and not with administrative details. The Board shall rely upon the Superintendent of Schools to develop policies upon request of the Board, to recommend policies for adoption and to administer policies enacted by the Board. Application of such policies to individual problems and jobs is an administrative function to be performed by the Superintendent.

II. Board Ethical Practices

Each member of the Hartford Board of Education will commit to and comply with the following code of ethics:

1. I will be a staunch advocate of high quality free public education for all Hartford children. In fulfilling my responsibilities, I will think of "children first".
2. I will, as an agent of the state, uphold and enforce all laws, rules, regulations and court orders pertaining to public schools, I will strive to bring any needed change only through legal and ethical procedures.
3. I will strive to create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children in Hartford.
4. I will work unremittingly to help my community understand the importance of proper support for public education, whether it be in providing adequate finances, optimum facilities, staffing and resources, or better educational programs for children.
5. I will join with my Board, staff, community and students in becoming fully informed about the nature, value and direction of contemporary education in our society. I will support needed change in our schools.

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6. I will strive to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about our schools, and will try to interpret community aspirations to the school staff.
7. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to "run the schools" through administration, but together with my fellow Board members, to see that they are well-run through effective policies.
8. I will attempt to confine my Board action to policy-making, planning and evaluation.
9. I will arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with my fellow Board members in a meeting. I will respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority-rule.
10. I will recognize that authority rests only with the whole Board assembled in a meeting and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the Board.
11. I will acknowledge that the Board represents the entire school community, and will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interests or partisan political groups. I will never use my position on the Board for gain of myself, relatives, or my friends.
12. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to schools which, if disclosed, might needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
13. I will insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.
14. I will strive to appoint the best professional leader available when a vacancy exists in the chief administrative position.
15. I will strive to appoint the best trained technical and professional personnel available, upon recommendation by the appropriate administrative officer.
16. I will support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties. I will strive to ensure that all personnel have not only the requisite responsibilities, but the necessary authority to perform effectively.
17. I will refer all complaints through the proper "chain of command" within the system, and will act on such complaints at public meetings only when administrative solutions fail.

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Ethical Practices (continued)

II. Board Ethical Practices (continued)

18. I will treat my fellow Board members, staff and all members of the public with respect and dignity at all times. I will strive to disagree without being disagreeable and without personal attacks, insults or groundless accusations.

19. I will comply with the Board's established ground rules at all meetings, recognize the authority of the chair, and ensure that all Board meetings are conducted in a fair and orderly manner.

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School District Legal Status

State law (10-240) provides that each town, through its Board of Education, shall maintain the control of all public schools within its limits. For this purpose, each town is considered a school district and shall have all the powers and duties of school districts as provided by law.

The legal name of the district is the Hartford Public Schools. It is a body corporate and shall have all the powers accruing to it by law. (10-241)

Legal Reference: United States Constitution, Tenth Amendment
 Connecticut State Constitution, Art. VIII, Sec. I
 Connecticut General Statutes
 10-15 Towns to maintain schools
 10-240 Control of schools
 10-241 Powers of school districts.

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Mission

Hartford's system of schools exists to provide all students with access to participation in a global economy through attainment of Academic Standards of the State of Connecticut and readiness for post-secondary education.

Vision

Hartford Public Schools is a system of high performing, diverse and distinctive schools of choice. The attainment of Hartford students in reading, math, science and college readiness will be reflective of the high educational outcomes of the State of Connecticut.

Strategy

Hartford Public Schools will create a system of high performing, distinctive schools of choice with racial and socio-economic diversity. The District will employ a *'balanced' theory of action* of reform governance linked to the organizational structure of an *'all-choice' system of schools*.

The District will employ a *'Balanced' Theory of Action* for reform governance linked to the organizational structure of an *all choice system of schools*.

A balanced theory of action is the most promising strategy relative to Hartford Public Schools' current operating environment and to advantage the strengths and minimize the weakness of the managed instruction and performance empowerment theories of change. Using this strategy, the district will define its relationship with each school on the basis of performance. Relatively high performing and/or significantly improving schools will be given considerable programmatic autonomy and freedom from bureaucratic operating constraints. Chronically low performing schools that fail to improve will be subject to district intervention, redesign, closure or replacement with higher performing school models. Schools in the mid-range will be provided with *'defined autonomy'* relative to program and operations to build their capacity for improvement.

Using a *'diverse provider'* strategy, Hartford Public Schools will evolve over time to a total system of choice schools. Two choice models will be employed. Inter-district choice schools will provide regional opportunities for the integration of city and suburban students. Intra-district choice schools will provide preference to students of their neighborhood with remaining seats available to other Hartford students. Parents would have the choice of a greater number of schools within transportation zones. Students will be equitably funded according to their needs and these funds will follow the child to their school of choice. A number of effective programmatic choices would be optimized through K-12 feeder patterns. Within the portfolio of choice available to parents would be a number of schools available through external providers or through public/private partnerships.

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Policies for Hartford Public Schools

The Board of Education shall maintain a manual of policies as the base for the governance of the school system. The policies must at all times be in harmony with applicable laws.

All of the Board of Education's policies shall, in addition, have their sources in the Board-adopted purposes, goals and objectives pertaining both to student learning and school system operations.

The Board of Education views its policies as aids to decision making and will to the best of its abilities make all its actions consistent with those policies.