

Board Members and Ethics

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When speaking of ethics, we are usually referring to normative ethics. Normative ethics is a part of moral philosophy concerned with the criteria of what is morally right or wrong and includes formulating rules that directly imply what human action, institutions, and the way of life should be. Morals and the rules that define human action and interaction can differ between cultures and not surprisingly between organizations; so, it is no wonder we get hung up on ethics, right? Perhaps breaking down normative ethics into categories will help us a little.

Within normative ethics are three major categories, **consequential** ethics, **virtue** ethics, and **deontological** ethics. Rather than lumping all ethical considerations under the major normative heading, the descriptions of these three ethical categories within the normative heading helps us to understand ethics on a practical basis, as well as a personal one.

Consequential ethics is based upon two principles: 1) Whether an act is right or wrong depends upon the results; and, 2) the more good acts a consequence produces, the *more right* the act is. This says that a person should choose actions that maximize good results. The application of this ethical category of anything a person might do at any given time, the morally right choice is the one that will yield the best overall conclusions.

Virtue ethics is person based, rather than action based. It is dependent upon the moral character of the person carrying out the action, rather than ethical duty, rules, or consequence. If a someone is viewed as a morally good person, then what they do is good, regardless of duty or consequence.

Deontological ethics says that the morality of an action is based on whether it is right or wrong under a set of rules, rather than on the consequences. An extreme example explains this very well. Most people would say that taking another person's life is morally wrong; however, taking the life of an intruder to protect your family changes the rule. Protecting the family is seen as the right thing to do and usually outweighs the moral weight of taking the life of the person who would do them immediate harm. Consequently, although taking someone's life, is still not morally good; the moral consequence is outweighed by the morally right thing to do, which is to protect your family.

Understandably, consequential and deontological ethics are the two most common and apparent categories that board members use to guide decision-making. It also is understood that board members' actions and decisions throughout the course of their board tenure are measured against individual ethics and the ethical character of the board collectively. Consequently, it is essential that members understand their board's ethics and ethical boundaries.



EVERY HOOSIER CHILD COUNTS!

Indiana K-12 Complete
Count Committee

It is estimated that for every child aged birth through age 9 missed in the count, Indiana will lose about \$10,000 in federal funds over the next decade.

Each child uncounted may reduce funding for community schooling needs by nearly \$1,000 per year, for a decade. That's approximately \$10,000 per child missed. Depending on the age of the child not counted, this could be their entire public school career!

It is incredibly important that you take the Census survey and encourage others to take it by April 1, 2020 so Every Hoosier Child Counts!

Be sure to adopt our sample board resolution in your local school community and take advantage of all of the resources that we've compiled in our PR Toolkit #2.

Click [HERE](#) to see what ISBA is doing to make sure that **#EveryHoosierChildCounts!**

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