

# Policy

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HORTONVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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## ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The proper performance of school business is dependent upon the maintenance of unusually high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and professional conduct by Board members, and the District's employees, offices and agents is essential to the Board's commitment to earn and keep the public's confidence in the School District.

For these reasons, the Board adopts the following guidelines that are designed to avoid the occurrence or appearance of any conflicts of interest. These guidelines are not intended to be all inclusive, nor to substitute for good judgement on the part of all professional employees, officer, and agents. Professional employees are expected to perform their duties in a manner free from conflict of interest or from situations that create the appearance of a conflict of interest, in a manner consistent with 19.59, Wis. Stats. The Board's interest in enforcing this policy is to assure that the decisions and actions of public employees retain the public's trust. Therefore, even a conflict relationship that can be viewed as beneficial to the District, or that was intended to be beneficial to the District, may still be a violation of this policy.

No professional employees, officer or agent shall engage in or have financial or other interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with the employee's, officer's, or agent's duties and responsibilities in the school system. This includes not only those interests that violate state criminal law, which typically require at least \$15,000 in financial interest, but also lesser valued conflicts that nonetheless create the appearance of using one's public position to secure a private benefit.

Professional employees, officers, or agents shall not directly supervise a relative employed by the District or employed in a position contracted for by the District.

Professional employees, officers, and agents shall not engage in business, private practice of their profession, the rendering of services, or the sale of goods of any type where advantage is taken of any professional relationship they may have with any employee, student, client, or parents of such students or clients in the course of their employment or professional relationship with the School District.

Included by way of illustration, rather than limitation are the following:

1. the provision of any private lessons or services for a fee, unless the provision of services is arranged outside of school and is separate from and in addition to regular support provided to students as part of the professional staff member's regular duties
2. soliciting on school premises or under circumstances which are coercive for the private sale of goods or services to student or other employees
3. the use, sale, or improper divulging of any privileged information about a student or client granted in the course of the employee's, officer's or agent's employment or professional relationship with the School District through their access to School District records;

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4. the referral of any student or client for lessons or services to any private business or professional practitioner if there are any expectations of reciprocal referrals, sharing of fees, or other remuneration for such referrals
5. the requirement of employees, students or clients to purchase any private goods or services provided by an employee, officer, or agent or any business or professional practitioner with whom any employee, officer or agent has a financial or other relationship, as condition of receiving any grades, credits, promotions, approvals, or recommendations.

Should exceptions to this policy be necessary in order to provide mandatory services to students or clients of the School district, all such exceptions will be made known to the employee's supervisor and will be disclosed to the District Administrator before entering into any private relationship.

Professional employees, officers, and agents shall not make use of materials, equipment, or facilities of the School District for their own personal financial gain or business interest. Examples would be the use of facilities before, during, or after regular business hours for service to private practice clients, or the checking out of items from an instructional materials center for private practice.

Professional employees, officers, and agents shall not participate in selection, award and administration of any contract to an entity in which they have a pecuniary interest or from which the dependent derives a profit. "Dependent" includes the employee's spouse; unemancipated child, stepchild or adopted child under the age of eighteen (18); or individual for whom the employee provides more than one-half (1/2) of the individual's support during a year. A "pecuniary interest" means an interest in a contract or purchase that will result or is intended to result in an ascertainable increase in the income or net worth of the employee or the employee's dependent who is under the direct or indirect administrative control of the professional employee or who receives a contract or purchase order that is reviewed, approved, or directly or indirectly administered by the employee.

Professional employees, officer, and agents may not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts.

However, pursuant to Federal rules, the School District has set standards for when an employee, officer, or agent may accept a gift of an unsolicited item of nominal value. For purposes of this section, "nominal value" means that the gift has a monetary value of \$50.00 or less.

Professional employees, officer, and agents must disclose any potential conflict of interest which may lead to a violation of this policy to the School District. Upon discovery of any potential conflict of interest, the School District will disclose, in writing, the potential conflict of interest to the appropriate Federal awarding agency or, if applicable, the pass-through entity.

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The District will also disclose, in a timely manner, all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity that affect a Federal award to the appropriate Federal awarding agency or, if applicable, the pass-through entity.

Professional employees, officers, and agents found to be in violation of this conflict of interest policy will be subject to discipline in accordance with Policy #3139 – Staff Discipline and/or discipline as specified in the Employee Handbook.

No professional staff employee may accept or engage in any employment, consulting, advising, or other professional activity with any organization other than the District, whether the employee will receive compensation for such outside activity **or not, without first providing notice to the District Administrator.**

In the event that, within the course of administering a Federally funded grant program or service to the District, any professional employee that identifies a conflict of interest, a potential conflict of interest, or that the appearance of a conflict of interest may arise in the course of administering the Federal grant funds, the employee must immediately notify either the Federal agency administering the grant in a manner consistent with that particular agencies rules on conflict or interests, or the District employee directly responsible for grant compliance. Such notice shall be provided at the earliest possible time.

It is a violation of this policy to take action or to refrain from taking action, or for an employee to otherwise use the employee's public position to obtain a financial gain or anything of substantial value for oneself or the employee's immediate family, as defined in 19.42(7), Wis. Stats.

## Legal References:

19.42(7) Wis. Stats.

19.59, Wis. Stats.

946.13, Wis. Stats.

2 C.F.R. 200.12

2 C.F.R. 200.113

2 C.F.R. 200.318

7 C.F.R. 3016.36(b)(3)

7 C.F.R. 3019.42

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