

STAFF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND ETHICS

All staff members have the responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest and to observe rules of conduct and ethical principles established by state law and District policies and regulations. Among other things, these require employees not to engage in certain activities or conduct, as follows.

Prohibited Activities

The following guidelines are included for staff direction. These guidelines are not intended to be all encompassing, but provide a reference point for staff members. When questions about specific activities arise, they should be discussed with the immediate supervisor, principal, Area Director, Assistant Superintendent, or the Superintendent.

District employees shall not:

1. Engage in activities that create a conflict of interest with the performance of his or her District duties and responsibilities, nor use their position with the District for private or individual gain.
2. Engage in activities that rely upon the use of District buildings, equipment, supplies, in-school services of other District personnel, in-school contact with District students, or on-the-job time of the employee, through such activities as:
 - a. Tutoring of and/or giving private lessons for pay to students assigned to the employee's class. (No District employee shall accept pay for tutoring any students during school time.)
 - b. Without prior District approval, promoting or selling educational tours, clinics, workshops, or other things when such promotion or sale results in personal or indirect gain.
 - c. Soliciting students or District employees for activities that are not District-approved and that result in personal or indirect gain.
3. Engage in activities that benefit the employee by personal gain, financial gain, or private advantage because of commercial exploitation of his/her status, influence, position with the District or professional relationship with students.

4. Disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of employment to further personal financial interests.
5. Accept a gift or benefit tantamount to a gift that is intended to, or would tend to, improperly influence a reasonable person in the employee's position or that the employee knows or should know is primarily intended to reward the employee in the performance of duties or the exercise of discretionary authority for the District. The phrase "economic benefit tantamount to a gift" includes a loan at a rate of interest substantially lower than the prevailing commercial rate and compensation received for private services rendered at a rate substantially exceeding fair market value, and discounts not available to the public, other than through District sanctioned programs.
6. Engage in a financial transaction for the employee's private business purposes with a person whom the employee supervises.
7. Perform any action in which the employee has discretionary authority that directly and substantially confers an economic benefit on a business or other undertaking in which he or she has a substantial financial interest or in which he or she is engaged as a counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.
8. Use District facilities, equipment, or supplies for personal, family, or business purposes.
9. Act as paid consultants or honoraria recipients during assigned working time.
10. Influence other employees, patrons, or students to participate in an activity or business venture in order to positively affect evaluations, promotions, or grades.

It is permissible for an employee to receive:

1. An occasional non-monetary gift that is insignificant in value or items of perishable or nonpermanent value, except lodging, travel expenses, tickets to sporting, recreational, educational, or cultural events, and coupons or discounts not otherwise generally available to District employees.
2. A non-monetary award publicly presented by a nonprofit organization in recognition of public service.
3. Payment or reimbursement for actual and necessary expenditures for travel and meals, for attendance at a convention or other meeting at the request of the

employee's supervisor and with the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.

4. Reimbursement for, or participation in, a social function or meeting, after obtaining the prior approval of the employee's supervisor and Superintendent or designee, that is designed to further the employee's knowledge in his or her position with the District.
5. Payment for speeches, presentations, or other public events reported as honoraria and approved by the Superintendent or designee.
6. A short leave of absence without pay (maximum of five working days) to participate as a paid consultant. The leave must be initially approved by the immediate supervisor and submitted to a Human Resources Department director for further consideration.

Any uncertainty on the part of an employee about activities that may result in a conflict of interest or ethical violation must be submitted in writing to a Human Resources Department director via the immediate supervisor for review, consideration, and direction.

It shall not be considered a breach of conduct for a staff member to use school facilities and equipment to communicate or correspond with constituents, family members, or business associates on an occasional basis.

A staff member may request an advisory opinion from the Secretary of State concerning issues relating to conduct that is proscribed by state law.

Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff

The giving and receiving of gifts by teachers and other staff members in situations related to their professional positions is not in accordance with good professional practice. Any action or comment by an individual that might be interpreted as an invitation for a gift is unethical. Although there may be no wrongful activity involved, acceptance of money, favors, or gifts may appear to impair professional judgment and any appearance of wrongful acts, as well as wrongful acts in themselves, are to be avoided.

Therefore, gifts from pupils, from parents, or from members of the school staff to school personnel shall be limited to token gifts of small value. This includes classroom exchange of gifts among pupils and the collection of money for gifts.

The above statements are not intended to interfere with any welfare or flower fund. Neither are they intended to preclude appropriate recognition on special occasions, such as retirement

or departure from service. In all other instances, words of appreciation or letters of warm and friendly greetings are encouraged as more desirable than gifts.

No organization may solicit funds of staff members within the schools nor may anyone distribute flyers or other materials related to fund drives through the schools, without the approval of the building administrator or principal. Nor shall staff members be made responsible, or assume responsibility for, the collection of any money or distribution of any fund drive literature within the schools without such activity having the approval of the building administrator or principal. As a matter of policy, the District expects such activities to be kept to a minimum.

Selection of Materials of an Employee-Author

Staff members who write, edit, publish, or otherwise develop textbooks or learning resource materials may not be members of any school or District-wide committee or selection process that will render recommendations or decisions for possible purchase by the District.

Nepotism

More than one member of an immediate family may be employed by the District, however, no employee may be under the direct supervision of, or be evaluated by, a member of the employee's immediate family.

Disciplinary Action

Violation of the policy statement or the regulations may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to:

1. Reprimand and/or written inclusion in the employee's evaluation report.
2. Dismissal proceedings in accordance with applicable law.

Approved by the Board of Education: March 21, 1989

Revised: August 17, 1999

Repealed by the Board and re-enacted and revised by the Superintendent: August 19, 2003

Revised: October 24, 2005

Douglas County School District Re. 1, Castle Rock, Colorado