

SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICER, BOARD MEMBER, AND EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

The Board of Education is committed to avoiding any situation in which the existence of conflicting interests of any officer, board member or employee may call into question the integrity of the management or operation of the school district. The Board recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of district officers, board members and staff as educators and public employees in the community. Adherence to a code of ethics promotes public confidence in the schools and furthers the attainment of district goals.

The Board also recognizes its obligation to adopt a code of ethics setting forth the standards of conduct required of all district officers, board members and employees under the provisions of the General Municipal Law. Therefore, every officer, and employee of the district and board member, whether paid or unpaid, shall adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. Official Conduct: In their official capacity, school board members:
 - Should not engage in any personal or commercial activity which presents a conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety which would bring discredit upon the school district, its staff and/or its students.
 - Must publicly disclose the nature and extent of any personal interest in any proposed contract or agreement that comes before the board and recuse oneself from voting as appropriate.
 - Must never use one's position as a school board member to benefit either oneself, a family member, or any other individual or entity in a manner inconsistent with the law or one's sincere belief that one is acting in the best interest of the school district and all stakeholders.
 - Must keep confidential all matters that one is privy to as a school board member that would constitute a violation of law to disclose and should keep confidential all matters that would gratuitously harm or embarrass one or more individuals or would fail to serve any goal of the school district.
 - Should behave in a manner consistent with this Code of Ethics.
2. Private Conduct: School board members should refrain from any private action that is: (1) contrary to their oath of office; (2) antithetical to the formally adopted vision, mission,, and/or goal statements and/or policies of the school district; or (3) inconsistent with this Code of Ethics and or board policies.
3. Gifts: An officer, board member or employee shall not directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift having a value of not to exceed \$75 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of their official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on their part.

However, the Board welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members. Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.

SOUTH ORANGETOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICER, BOARD MEMBER AND EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

4. Confidential information: An officer, board member, or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of their official duties or use such information to further their personal interest. The disclosure of confidential information would constitute official misconduct.
5. Representation before the Board or District: An officer, board member or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, expressed or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school district.
6. Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board: A member of the Board of Education and any officer or employee of the district, whether paid or unpaid, must publicly disclose the nature and extent of any interest they or their spouse have, will have or later acquire in any actual or proposed contract, purchase agreement, lease agreement or other agreement involving the school district (including oral agreements), to the governing body and his/her immediate supervisor (where applicable) even if it is not a prohibited interest under applicable law. Such disclosure must be in writing and made part of the official record of the school district. Disclosure is not required in the case of an interest that is exempted under Section 803(2) of the General Municipal Law. The term "interest" means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee. Exceptions to the conflict of interest law can be found in Section 802 of the General Municipal Law.
7. Investments in conflict with official duties: An officer, board member, or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with their official duties. Exceptions to the conflict of interest law can be found in Section 802 of the General Municipal Law.
8. Private employment: An officer or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for, or promise to accept private employment when that employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of their official duties.
9. Future employment: An officer or employee shall not, after the termination of service or employment with the district, appear before the Board in relation to any action, proceeding, or application in which they personally participated during the period of their service or employment or that was under their active consideration.

Distribution of Code of Ethics

The Superintendent of Schools shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed to every member of the Board, every officer and employee of the school district. Each officer, board member, and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment. In addition, the Superintendent shall ensure that a copy of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law shall be kept posted in each public building under the district's jurisdiction in a place conspicuous to the district's officers and employees.

Penalties

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of the Board's code of ethics and its accompanying regulation may be fined, suspended or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.

SOUTH ORANGETOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY 2160

SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICER, BOARD MEMBER AND EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

Federal Grants

As detailed in the Federal Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR, Part 200), no employee, board member, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a Federal award if they have a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, board member, officer, or agent, any member of their immediate family, their partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, board members, employees, and agents of the School District may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. However, the School District may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the School District.

Cross-ref:

1130, Media Relations and Communications
1800, Gifts from the Public

Ref: General Municipal Law §§806-808
Governance Compact 2160E

Adopted: June 17, 2010

Rev. & Readopted: March 12, 2020

Rev. & Readopted: June 16, 2022