

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT REQUIRED OF STAFF AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

POLICY

The Board of Education has adopted statements of vision and mission, core values and beliefs, and a Code of Ethics and Business Conduct to establish the Board's commitment of integrity and responsibility to the patrons and taxpayers of the District. In concert with this commitment, it is the policy of the Board of Education that board members and staff members shall perform their duties and responsibilities in a manner which is legal, ethical and appropriate for the purpose and business of the District. In the absence of specific guidance, the Board expects board members and staff members to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the highest standards of professional conduct.

Staff members should seek additional guidance from the Administration or their supervisor in any situation in which the staff member is uncertain of the appropriate behavior. Board members should seek additional guidance from fellow board members, the Superintendent, the District's legal counsel or the Oklahoma State School Boards Association.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "staff member(s)" shall include all regular full-time employees and all non-regular employees (part-time employees, substitute employees and temporary or adjunct employees) of the District. The term "board member(s)" shall include all members of the Board of Education.

The following statements support the core components of the ethical foundation for the Oklahoma Career Tech System and Tulsa Technology Center. To this end, the following statements are standards for the Code of Ethics and Business Conduct for board members and staff members:

- A. Student and Client Success** - We will focus on the success of students and clients as the fundamental value upon which all decisions are made.
- B. Accountability** - We believe that the Oklahoma CareerTech System and the District's board members and staff members are accountable to the taxpayers and patrons of the Tulsa Technology Center School District and the State of Oklahoma.
- C. Role of Board of Education and Staff** - We understand that the role of the Board of Education is to set policy and direction for the school district, and the role of the

superintendent and staff members is to implement the policies and procedures of the Board in a fair and consistent manner.

D. Conflict of Interest and Use of Position for Personal Gain – Board members and staff members will not use their position or influence for any personal gain, will avoid actions that create a conflict of interest, and strive to avoid actions that might appear to create a conflict of interest.

E. Honesty, Integrity and Professional Responsibility – Board members and staff members will fulfill their duties and responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

F. Support of the Constitutions and Laws of The United States of America and the State of Oklahoma – Board members and staff members will obey and support the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Oklahoma, and obey all federal, state and local laws.

G. Professional Effectiveness and Professional Development – Board members and staff members will improve their professional effectiveness through continuing professional development.

H. Communication – Board members and staff members will encourage and support effective communication between the Board, staff members and all elements of the community.

I. Ethics Checklist – Board members and staff members are encouraged to utilize the following checklist to guide them in making decisions:

- Yes ___ No ___ **Is it legal?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **Does it violate our vision, mission or core beliefs and values?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **Does it violate our Code of Ethics and Business Conduct, or our policies and procedures?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **Would you want to see this decision in tomorrow's local or national headlines?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **How would you feel after you execute this decision?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **Would you want your family to know?**
- Yes ___ No ___ **Would you want this decision levied on you or a family member?**

The Board recognizes that it is not possible to define and prescribe each circumstance related to the conduct required for every board member and staff member. The areas listed below are given special emphasis and appropriate examples are provided. They are not intended to be all inclusive.

- I. Equal Treatment with Dignity, Respect and Courtesy** - Tulsa Technology Center has a strong commitment to equal opportunity and fairness in the workplace and within our community.

All board members and staff members are expected to (a) exemplify ethical behavior in their relationships with students, patrons, and fellow board members and staff members, and (b) treat all persons with respect, courtesy and dignity, consistent with the highest standards of professional conduct.

Current and prospective staff members shall not be denied equal employment and advancement opportunities.

Students, clients and patrons shall not be denied equal and impartial access to programs, services and information.

Board members and staff members shall not act or behave in a manner, whether specifically listed herein or not, that detracts from a positive and appropriate learning and working environment.

- A. Supervisor and Staff Relationships** - The exploitation by a supervisor of a subordinate staff member is improper and prohibited. In particular, all supervisors and all staff members are prohibited from engaging in any commercial, business, romantic, sexual or other similar type of a personal relationship with any staff member who is or may be subordinate to the supervisor. The prohibited relationships do not include normal commercial transactions that would be conducted routinely by the general public.

- B. Board Member and Staff Member Behavior** - All board members and staff members, by their actions, knowingly or otherwise, represent to students and customers the level of professionalism that exists in the District.

The use of vulgar or obscene language and inappropriate conduct in the presence of students or clients or fellow board members and staff members is unprofessional and therefore prohibited.

Similarly, discussion with students of issues personal to any staff member, such as sexual issues, marital or divorce issues, or other highly personal topics is inappropriate and is a violation of this policy.

The use of alcohol, tobacco products or illegal or illicit drugs in the presence of students during school or school related activities is unconditionally prohibited.

Racial, ethnic, or sexual slurs constitute unprofessional conduct. Comments or statements, even in jest, reflecting adversely on any person or group with reference to race, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or physical disabilities are prohibited.

- C. Student Relationships** - Exploitation of student relationships is inconsistent with obligations owed to students. Commercial and business dealings between secondary (high school) or adult students and board members or staff members is prohibited. The prohibited dealings do not include normal commercial transactions that would be conducted routinely by the general public.

A board member or staff member may not use a relationship with a student, or a relationship that a teacher has with a student for personal gain or use student owned or district owned property for personal gain.

Exploitation of a student may result from an improper personal relationship with a student. Gestures and physical conduct, even though innocent and properly motivated, may be misinterpreted by students or parents.

Conduct that might be characterized as evidencing an improper or unprofessional attachment toward a student must be avoided. Sexual or romantic relationships with secondary students are strictly prohibited.

Personal relationships between adult students and board members or staff members can unintentionally create workplace and classroom problems for all parties. While not expressly prohibited by this policy, board members and staff members should carefully consider the implications of any personal relationship with an adult student.

Board members and staff members can be held accountable for the negative outcomes in the workplace, even if unintentional, that may result from these relationships.

II. Legality – A board member or staff member who violates the law in the conduct of his or her responsibilities, or who violates the law in a manner that affects the employment relationship, will be in violation of this policy.

A. Compliance with All Laws - An honest and trusting relationship with customers, clients, board members, staff members, vendors, taxpayers, accreditation agencies and organizations, and governmental regulators is essential to the District's long-term success. Accordingly, board members and staff members shall follow all applicable laws (Federal, State and local), rules and regulations, and legal requirements relative to the performance of his or her duties.

As legal issues can be very complex, if in doubt, board members and staff members are to seek guidance from supervisors or other members of Administration or Board of Education. The District may provide access to legal counsel through the Superintendent or his designee or the Board of Education.

To maintain and uphold the District's accountability standards, the offering or accepting of bribes, kickbacks or other payoffs designed to influence the recipient's judgment is a violation of this policy. Specifically, payment or receipt of money, gifts, loans or other favors whether intended or not to compromise the ability to make objective and fair business decisions is prohibited.

B. Board of Education Policy and Procedures - Policy and procedures of the Board of Education are intended to provide appropriate guidance and limitations concerning the conduct of District business, both internally and externally by board members and staff members. Therefore, it is an expectation that the professional conduct of board members and staff members shall include adherence to all Board policies and procedures.

C. Fraudulent Conduct - Tulsa Technology Center is committed to transacting its business in an honest and non-fraudulent manner. All authorized information provided to any person or entity must be free from deliberate misrepresentation. A board member or staff member who makes intentionally false statements to the public, a fellow board member or staff member, students, clients or customers is in violation of this policy. Plagiarism to any degree is unprofessional and will not be tolerated. Likewise, cheating by or for students, or knowing and condoning the cheating of others, is a violation of this policy.

III. Protecting Company Assets - Security of and care for the assets of the District is a critical part of accountability to taxpayers. Board members and staff members are responsible for safeguarding the District resources.

A. Use of Company Assets - Board members and staff members may not take, loan, donate, sell, damage or use District assets for unauthorized purposes.

B. Proper Recording of Data - The proper management and recording of information and data required in individual position responsibilities or generally required of all board members and staff members is expected. Falsification of information of any type or entry of intentionally erroneous or misleading data, including time sheet information, cash audits, equipment inventory, or any other required data recording is strictly prohibited.

C. Confidential Information - While much of the information held within the District is considered public information, the Oklahoma Open Records Act does not apply to records specifically required by law to be kept confidential. These include certain enumerated personnel records and other records where disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of a person's privacy. Examples are employee evaluations and payroll deductions.

Student information is also highly regulated. All board members and staff members who deal with student records must be familiar with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In general, disclosure of District-held information should be restricted pending approval by the immediate supervisor or the next succeeding level of supervision. Requests for release of information to the public should be handled through the District's Open Records Act policy and procedures.

D. Fiscal Management - It is imperative that sound fiscal management procedures be followed to ensure maximum benefit for each dollar received and expended. Board members and staff members must adhere to accepted principles of accounting, reporting, and purchasing practices. Accordingly, misuse of district property and/or funds constitutes unacceptable behavior.

Professional Conduct Required of Staff and Board of Education Members Procedures

- I. **General** - Complaints or reports of concern for which specific resolution procedures are provided by law or by other Board policy or procedure shall be directed through those prescribed channels. This includes public concerns and complaints, grievances as defined in the collective bargaining agreement, and complaints regarding sexual harassment or discrimination.

Each board member and staff member is responsible for promptly reporting any conduct or behavior which they believe is unauthorized, unlawful, unethical, or in violation of this or other Board policies.

Supervisors are directly responsible for providing their employees with the resources necessary to resolve problems or concerns. A staff member should first consider reporting a suspected violation to his or her supervisor. In the event the problem is not handled to the staff member's satisfaction or the staff member is not comfortable discussing it with the immediate supervisor, the matter should be discussed with the next level(s) of supervision.

Other reporting channels, including other supervisors, the Human Resources Department and the office of the Chief Operations Officer, are also available to receive the report and provide assistance.

Anonymous reports frequently provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Individuals making a report are encouraged to provide all relevant information including the identity of the person rendering the report of suspected violation. It is the responsibility of Administration to evaluate the complaint to determine if enough information is available to conduct an investigation.

No adverse action shall be taken or threatened against anyone as a reprisal for making a complaint or disclosing information unless the complaint was made or the information was disclosed with the knowledge that it was false or with the complainant's intentional disregard for its accuracy or truthfulness.

Any board member or staff member who is found to have violated this policy may be disciplined. The sanctions imposed for violations will depend upon the severity of the violation and may be progressive unless the violation is determined to be so serious as to warrant more severe action. Penalties for staff members will be administered in

accordance with the District's policies and procedures, up to and including termination. The Board of Education shall be responsible for imposing any penalties on members of the Board of Education.

II. Reporting Violations. Alleged violations may be reported in a variety of ways.

A. For complaints about staff members, alleged violations may be reported in the following ways:

1. Directly to a third-party reporting agency contracted with by Tulsa Technology Center via a toll-free telephone line, 1-800-673-0128.
2. By e-mail to the following address: mycompliancereport.com.
3. By district e-mail, telephone, in writing or in person to the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Chief Operations Officer, Human Resources Director, or the employee's immediate supervisor.

B. For complaints about Board members, alleged violations may be reported in the following ways:

1. Directly to any member of the Board of Education.
2. Directly to a third-party reporting agency contracted with by Tulsa Technology Center via a toll-free telephone line, 1-800-673-0128.

III. Investigation of Alleged Violations - The nature of the violation being reported shall determine the manner in which it shall be investigated and resolved. Reports shall be investigated by the Superintendent's designee or an independent third party. The Board of Education does not investigate complaints or reports of alleged violations.

Anonymous reports or complaints may not be investigated if the allegation provides no source of possible corroboration. Retaliation against anyone who reports a suspected violation will not be tolerated. Both retaliation and frivolous reporting are violations of this policy.

IV. Report Form - The "Suspected Violation Report Form" is included as part of these Procedures. The form is available on the District website and TechNet. Completion of the form will assist the investigation, but is not required in order for a complaint or report to be submitted. The form may be copied and mailed, e-mailed, hand delivered or used to provide the information via telephone.



Possible Ethics Violation Complaint and Report

If completing electronically, use the TAB key to move between fields of data you are entering (using the ENTER key distorts the form).

Report submitted by:	Telephone number:
Mailing address (optional): street city state zip	Email address:
	Do you want to be contacted concerning outcome of the investigation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Day, Date and time of event or act being reported: Day Date Approx. Time <input type="checkbox"/> a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> p.m.	Location the event or act took place:
Names of all persons involved in reported event or act: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Names of witnesses or other persons with knowledge of event or act: 1. 2. 3. 4.

Description of event or act being reported (use additional sheets if necessary):

Please note: Completely anonymous reports may not be investigated if the report does not provide another source or means to corroborate and validate the information being reported. Confidentiality is available via the Ethics Hot Line.

Signature	Date signed
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To submit a report concerning a staff member (employee), return completed form to the Superintendent, any District administrator or the employee's immediate supervisor. To submit a report concerning a Board of Education member, send the completed form to any member of the Board of Education. Addresses may be found on TechNet (<http://technet.tulsatech.org/>)