Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

BOARD POLICY 4505

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees (Board) is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct and ethics. This Board Policy sets forth the Washoe County School District's (District) standards of professional conduct and the processes used to address unacceptable behavior and related employment issues in the workplace, or outside the workplace when conduct impacts an employee's ability to do his/her job and/or influences the District's overall effectiveness.

DEFINITIONS

1. "Conflict of Interest" is the private or personal interest of a public officer or employee, or of someone close to a public officer or employee, that is sufficient to affect his or her independence of judgment or the objective exercise of public duty.

2. "Duty of care" is the obligation to maintain the security, well-being, and safety of others.

3. "Duty of loyalty" means conducting oneself based on the principle of doing no harm to the District as a result of one's actions.

4. "Ethics" is defined by Oxford Dictionaries as "moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity." Under Nevada state law, the Code of Ethical Standards is established through Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 281A.400 through 281A.430.

5. "Good Faith" refers to the employee's belief that the conduct reported was a violation of law or District policy/regulation; and that belief was reasonable in light of the employee's training and experience.

6. "Third Degree of Consanguinity" are family relationships included within the third degree are children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and great grandparents. Consanguinity can be by blood (birth), marriage (stepchildren, etc.) or adoption.

7. "Third Degree of Affinity" the degree is the same as the degree of underlying relationship by blood. For example, a husband is related by marriage (affinity) to his wife's relatives in the same way that she is related to them by blood (sanguinity). Divorce or death terminates relationships by affinity created by a marriage unless a child of the marriage is living. If a child of the marriage is living, the marriage is considered to continue until the youngest child of that marriage reaches the age of 21.

POLICY

1. Employee Standards of Professional Conduct. All employees of the Washoe County School District are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that supports the mission of the District, the District's Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, and the performance of their duties.

2. Ethics and Conflict of Interest. Trustees, Superintendent, administration, and employees are expected to create a culture of ethical behavior and must avoid any conflict of interest throughout District by complying with NRS 281A, Board Policies, and Administrative Regulations.

    a. No employee shall receive unlawful compensation, commission, or personal profit in the course of performing District duties nor shall the office or position of any employee be used for unlawful purposes or for personal gain.

    b. Any District employee, including paid and unpaid coaches, or anyone who receives compensation from the District in any form, who own, contract with, are employed by, or volunteer with any entity other than the District, shall adhere to all District board policies and administrative regulations regarding ethical behavior and shall not grant any privilege or benefit to another entity, its employees, or members at the expense of the District. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of District information technology network services, equipment, facilities, and/or property.

    c. Employees must disclose, to his/her supervisor, any conflict of interest regarding his/her position to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity at the time such potential conflict is realized.

    d. No employee shall serve on a hiring committee or make other hiring decisions regarding an individual who is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity.

    e. The Board recognizes that an inherent conflict of interest and/or appearance of impropriety arises when a supervisor or other school employee evaluates another employee with whom he or she is involved

within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity. Such a relationship between evaluator and the individual being evaluated taints the evaluation process, adversely affects employee morale and productivity, and compromises the District's interest in promoting qualified employees on a fair and objective basis.

3. Culture of Respect

    a. A culture of respect commits the District and its employees to:

        i. Mutual respect;

        ii. Productive collaboration;

        iii. Effective communications; and

        iv. Continuous improvement.

    b. Through that commitment, all employees are expected to:

        i. Treat others fairly, have mutual respect, promote a team environment, and avoid the intent and/or appearance of unethical or compromising practices;

        ii. Demonstrate positive relationships with students; participate in conferences with colleagues and parents on students' needs and progress; and establish an environment in which each student feels successful and productive; and

        iii. Demonstrate a duty of loyalty and care toward the District all coworkers, students, parents/guardians, volunteers and other visitors to District properties and activities.

4. Discipline

    a. All District employees and volunteers shall comply with all Board policies, administrative regulations and other governing documents of the District, as well as all local, state and federal laws and regulations. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

    b. Nevada state law and progressive discipline plans will be utilized to fairly and consistently address employee behavior, conduct, and/or performance that is incompatible with the policies of the District, as well as the individual collective bargaining agreements.

5. Prohibition on Retaliation. The District shall not suspend or terminate the employment of, or take other adverse personnel action against, an employee

who in good faith reports a violation of law by the District or District employee to an appropriate authority, including school police or other law enforcement agency or through established District complaint processes.

6. The Board hereby directs the Superintendent to adopt an Administrative Regulation(s) to implement and maintain the purpose of this Board Policy. The Superintendent shall include in such Administrative Regulation(s) the following provisions:

    a. Maintain a neat, clean, and professional appearance. The District reserves the right to insist that the dress and grooming of employees not present potential health or safety problems or cause disruptions.

    b. Report to work as scheduled and seek approval from their supervisors in advance for any changes to the established work schedule, including the use of leave and late or early arrivals and departures. Leave and related employee benefits shall be utilized in the manner for which they were intended.

    c. Devote full effort to job responsibilities during work hours and perform assigned duties and responsibilities with the highest degree of public trust.

        i. Maintain the qualifications, certification, licensure, and/or training requirements identified for their positions;

        ii. Resolve work-related issues and disputes in a professional manner and through established processes;

        iii. Report to management circumstances or concerns that may affect satisfactory work performance, including any inappropriate (fraudulent, illegal, unethical) activities of other employees, or misconduct toward a student; and

        iv. Work cooperatively with others to achieve the goals and objectives of the District.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This Board Policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:

    a. Board Policy 4117, Licensed Employee Evaluation and Probation;

    b. Board Policy 4119, Separation of Service;

    c. Board Policy 4160, Mandatory Self-Reporting By Staff: Charge, Arrest or Conviction of a Crime; and

d. Board Policy 4214, Drug Free Workplace.

2. This Board Policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to include:

    a. Chapter 281A, Ethics in Government;

    b. Chapter 288, Relations between Governments and Public Employees;

    c. Chapter 289, Peace Officers;

    d. Chapter 391, Personnel, and specifically:

        i. NRS 391.274, Policy prescribing duties, roles and responsibilities of school counselors; limitation on time school counselors required to assist with test administration.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
06/9/2015	1.0	Adopted
02/27/2018	2.0	Revised: Removed freedom of speech; revised ethics and conflict of interest
11/23/2021	3.0	Revised: Update language, removed reference to volunteers, added definitions.