

CODE OF ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No school board member may use his or her office to obtain anything of substantial value for the board member or his or her immediate family. No board member may solicit or accept anything of value if it could reasonably be considered a reward for any official action. No school board member may take any official action affecting a matter in which the school board member or the board member's immediate family has a substantial financial interest. No board member may use his or her office to produce a substantial direct or indirect benefit for the school board member, or members of his or her immediate family.

In order to avoid the possibility of a conflict of interest, members of the Board of Education shall not serve in any capacity as paid employees of the District other than in their school board member position.

A school board member whose spouse or dependent child is employed by the school district:

- shall not participate in negotiations, discussions, or votes on the contract relating to their spouse or dependent child's employment and shall leave the meeting during such proceedings in order to avoid the appearance of a possible conflict of interest;
- shall not participate in negotiations, discussions, or votes on the terms of another union's contract if it will affect the terms of the contract relating to their spouse or dependent child's employment in other than an inconsequential manner and shall leave the meeting during such proceedings in order to avoid the appearance of a possible conflict of interest;
- may participate in a disciplinary or similar matter affecting another district employee if the action does not result in a school board member's spouse or dependent child obtaining a substantial benefit or value from such decision;
- may participate in decisions affecting class size, working hours, or other general school district policy decisions if the effect on the school board member's spouse or dependent child does not differ materially from the effect on other district employees;
- may vote on the district's budget if the school board has already entered into a contract that establishes district employees' salaries and benefits for the period covered by the budget but may not vote on the budget if the budget will substantially affect the salaries and benefits of the school board member's spouse or dependent child.

In addition, a school board member shall not have any direct or indirect monetary interest exceeding the statutory exception stated in 946.13(2)(a), Wisconsin Statutes, in any contract furnishing any service, equipment, or supplies to the school district.

In the event that a board member or a board member's spouse is employed by a corporation or business, or has an indirect interest in a corporation or business, which furnishes goods or services to the school district, the school board member shall declare those interests and refrain from debating or voting upon any question relating to contracting with the company.

In the event that any employee of the District becomes elected to the Board of Education, that employee shall resign from the position of employment with the District prior to taking the oath of office as a school board member. Conversely, if a board member wishes to apply for employment with the District, the board member shall first resign from the school board.

It is not the intent of this policy to prevent the school district from contracting with corporations or businesses because a board member is an employee of the firm. The policy is designed to prevent placing a board member in a position where the board member's interest in the public schools and interest in his/her place of employment (or other indirect interest) might conflict, and to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, even though such a conflict may not exist.

LEGAL REF.: Section 19.59 – Wisconsin Statutes
Section 946.10 – Wisconsin Statutes
Section 946.12 – Wisconsin Statutes
Section 946.13(2)(a) – Wisconsin Statutes
1997 Wisconsin Ethics Board Opinion

CROSS REF.: 161 – Board Member Authority and Responsibilities
161-Rule – Individual Board Member Responsibilities

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