

ETHICS AND CONFLICTS

A. General Ethical Behavior. While serving on the Governing Authority, each Director agrees to:

1. Obey the law and follow and implement the School's policies;
2. Not disclose or use, without appropriate authorization, any information acquired in the course of the Director's duties that is privileged or confidential under the law;
3. Not speak or act for the Board unless granted proper authority;
4. Work with the Board to establish, review and revise effective policies;
5. Delegate authority for administration to School administrators/staff;
6. Make every effort to attend all Board meetings;
7. Become informed on issues before the Board and relating to Community Schools and school choice;
8. Debate matters before the Board, but once voted upon, accept and support the Board's decision; and
9. Act ethically and in conformance with the School's mission and goals.

B. Public Officers Ethics and Conflicts Rules – Improper Influence or Use of Authority.

Ohio law requires that all Board members and School officials, including teachers performing or possessing authority to perform administrative/supervisory functions, comply with these laws.

1. Revised Code Section 102.03(D) & (E). A Board member cannot use, or authorize the use of, the authority or influence of his/her office or employment, or solicit or accept anything of value of such character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon him/her with respect to his/her duties.
 - a. "Anything of value" includes money and every other thing of value.
 - b. A thing of value has an improper character when it is secured from a party interested in matters before, or doing or seeking business with, the community school, its Board or employees, or where it could impair a Board member's objectivity and independence of judgment regarding his/her official actions and decisions.
 - c. A Board member shall not participate in matters that will benefit parties with whom he or she has a close family, economic, or business relationship.
 - d. **Abstain.** A Board member may avoid a conflict under R.C. 102.03(D) and (E) by abstaining from voting and refraining from discussions or deliberations of the Board regarding the matter. The Board shall follow the procedures set forth in Part E of this policy when presented with a transaction to which R.C. 102.03(D) or (E) applies.

2. Revised Code Section 2921.42(A)(1). A Board member cannot authorize or employ the influence of his/her office to secure authorization of any public contract in which he/she, a member of his/her family, or any of his/her business associates has an interest.
 - a. A prohibited interest must be direct and definite and may be either pecuniary or fiduciary in nature.
 - b. **Abstain**. A Board member may avoid a conflict under R.C. 2921.42(A)(1) by abstaining from voting and refraining from discussions or deliberations of the Board regarding the matter. The Board shall follow the procedures of Part D of this policy when considering a situation involving R.C. 2921.42(A)(1).
3. Revised Code Section 2921.42(A)(3). A Board member shall not occupy any position of profit in the prosecution of a public contract which she or the community school board authorized, and which was not let by competitive bidding to the lowest and best bidder while the Board member holds a position on the Board or within one year thereafter.
 - a. A Board member occupies a position of profit in a public contract whenever he/she will receive a fee or compensation that is paid from or is dependent upon the contract, or the Board member will receive some other profit or benefit from the contract.
 - b. **Abstention** will not cure an R.C. 2921.42(A)(3) conflict.
4. Revised Code Section 2921.42(A)(4). A Board member cannot have an interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract entered into by or for the use of the community school.
 - a. A Board member has a prohibited interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract if the Board member would financially benefit from the contract, or the Board member has an ownership or fiduciary interest in the entity that is entering into the contract, unless the exception in R.C. 2921.42(C) applies.
 - b. For the exception to apply pursuant to R.C. 2921.42(C), the subject of the contract must be necessary supplies or services for the community school, and the supplies or services must be unobtainable elsewhere for the same or lower cost, or be furnished to the community school as part of a continuing course of dealing established prior to the Board member becoming associated with the community school, and, treatment of the community school must either be preferential to or the same as that accorded to other customers in a similar transaction. Under the exception, the entire transaction conducted at “arms-length” with the Board’s full knowledge of the Board member’s interest.
 - c. Abstention will not cure an R.C. 2921.42(A)(4) conflict unless the exception in R.C. 2921.42(C) applies.
5. Revised Code Section 2921.43(A). No public servant may knowingly solicit or accept improper compensation (a) other than as allowed by R.C. 102.03 (G), (H) and (I), to perform their acts, duties or services in their public servant capacity or as a supplement thereof, or, (b) for any additional or greater fees or costs than allowed by law in order to perform their official duties;
6. Revised Code Section 2921.43(B). No public servant shall solicit or accept anything of value for their own personal or business use or for the business or personal use of another

public servant or party official, in consideration for (a) appointing, securing, maintaining, or renewing the appointment of any person to public office, employment or agency, or, (b) preferring or maintaining a public employee's compensation, duties, placement, location, promotion or other material aspect of employment. A person is not prohibited from making voluntary contributions.

7. Revised Code 2921.43(C). No person shall coerce any contribution for the benefit of a political party, campaign committee, legislative campaign fund, political action committee or political contributing entity, in consideration for (a) appointing, securing, maintaining or renewing the appointment of any person to any public office, employment or agency, or (b) preferring or maintaining the status of any public employee's compensation, duties, placement, location, promotion or other material aspects of employment. Coercion need not actually cause or prohibit any action from actually occurring. A person is not prohibited from making voluntary contributions.
8. Revised Code Section 2921.44. A fiscal officer shall be disqualified from serving as a public official for four years after being found guilty of dereliction of duty in Ohio and, also prohibited from holding a public office until all restitution or repayment required by a court has been satisfied. Dereliction of duty may include (a) recklessly creating a deficiency, incurring a liability, or expending a greater sum than is appropriated by the general assembly for the use in any one year for the entity to which the public official is connected; or, (b) recklessly failing to perform a duty expressly imposed or forbidden by law with respect to the public servant's office.

C. **Excess Benefit Transaction**. Internal Revenue Code Section 4958 provides for an excise tax that is imposed on a "disqualified person" who enters into an "excess benefit transaction" with the School. The tax may be imposed on members of management who approve the transaction. A transaction is an "excess benefit transaction" if the School pays more than fair market value for goods or services.

1. "Disqualified person" includes:
 - a. A person in a position to exercise substantial influence over the affairs of the School at any time during a five year period ending on the date of the transaction;
 - b. A member of the family of a person described in a, above;
 - c. A corporation or other entity in which persons described in a and b, above, have a 35% or greater voting or ownership interest; and
 - d. Any person having a relationship described in a, b, or c above with a company that has contracted to manage the School.

D. **IRC Procedure for Matters Involving Conflicts**. The Board shall follow the following procedures when it is called upon to consider any matter with respect to which an "interested person" has a "financial interest" as those terms are defined below. Please note: the fact that the Board of Directors has followed the procedures set forth below will not enable an "interested person" to avoid the legal prohibitions of R.C. 2921.42(A)(3) and (4) discussed in Parts B.3 and B.4, above.

1. For purposes of these procedures the following words have the following definitions.

- a. An “interested person” is any Board member, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below.
 - b. A person has a “financial interest” if the person, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family has:
 - i. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the School has a transaction or arrangement;
 - ii. A compensation arrangement with the School or with any entity or individual with which the School has a transaction or arrangement; or
 - iii. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - c. “Compensation” includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
2. Duty to Disclose. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board members and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 3. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under this procedure, a person who has a financial interest will have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists. Please note: the situations described in Part B present a conflict of interest. As such, the Board need not determine whether a conflict exists for any situation described in Part B. If the situation is not described in Part B, after disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person that is permitted under these policies, he/she shall leave the Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
 4. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.
 - a. Except as otherwise provided in these policies, an interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation permitted under these policies, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
 - b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the School can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested Board members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the School's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

E. Other Procedures and Record Keeping Requirements.

1. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.
 - a. If the Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
2. Documentation. The minutes of the Board and all committees with board- delegated powers shall contain:
 - a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
 - b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.
3. Annual Statements. Each Board member, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:
 - a. Received a copy of the conflict of interest policy;
 - b. Read and understands the policy;
 - c. Agreed to comply with the policy;
 - d. Understands the School is charitable and must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes to maintain its federal tax exemption;
 - e. Acknowledges that a voting Board member who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation;

- f. Acknowledges that a voting committee member whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation; and
 - g. Acknowledges that no voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.
4. Periodic Reviews. To ensure the School operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:
- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
 - b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management companies conform to the School's written policies, are properly recorded, are a reasonable investment or a reasonable payment for goods and services, further its charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.
5. Use of Outside Experts. The School may use outside experts in conducting its reviews, but, such use does not relieve the Board's obligation to conduct periodic reviews.
6. Immediate Relatives. An "immediate relative" means the Board member's spouse, children, parents, grandparents, and siblings, as well as in-laws residing in the same household as the Board member.
- a. If the School is not sponsored by a school district or educational service center, no present or former Board member, or immediate relative of any present or former Board member, shall be an owner, employee, or consultant of the School's sponsor or operator, unless at least one year has elapsed since the person's Board membership ceased.
 - b. If the School is sponsored by a school district or educational service center, no present or former Board member, or immediate relative of any present or former Board member, shall (i) be an officer of the Sponsor's governing board, unless at least one year has elapsed since the person's Board membership ceased, or (ii) serve as an employee of or consultant for the department, division, or section of the Sponsor organization that is directly responsible for sponsoring community schools, or have supervisory authority over such a department, division, or section, unless at least one year has elapsed since the person's Board membership ceased.
7. Annual Disclosure Requirement. Each Board member shall annually file a disclosure statement setting forth the names of any immediate relatives or business associates employed, within the previous three (3) years, by (a) the sponsor or operator of the School, (b) a school district or educational service center that has contracted with the School, or (c) a vendor that is or has engaged in business with the School.

IDEA Greater Cincinnati, Inc.

Each Governing Authority Director (Board member) shall sign a copy of this Ethics and Conflicts Policy in order to demonstrate his/her commitment to these principles.

Signature and Title

Date

Note: All School officials and employees, including teachers who do perform or who have the authority to perform administrative and supervisory functions, are subject to all Ohio Ethics and Conflicts Laws and should sign the above acknowledgment as well.

Ohio Revised Code Chapter 102, Sections 2921.42, 2921.43, 2921.44 and 3314.02.