

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In order to protect the public trust and maintain confidence in the fairness of public education, conflicts of interest or even the appearance of conflict must be avoided. Therefore, it is the policy of the Southwest Technology Center Board of Education that school district personnel shall not engage in any activity that would create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is, first, to identify activities of employees and board members that may constitute willful neglect of duty and, thus, should be prohibited and, second, to further identify activities that, although they do not constitute prohibited activities, should be disclosed to the superintendent and so create a duty to disclose those activities.

Scope

The policy applies to personnel of all levels within the district, including teachers, administrators, and all other employees. All references to “employees” in this policy shall apply to all of the foregoing.

Use of District Property

Personal property acquired by the district is intended for use by employees of the district within the scope of their employment. Use of school property, including, but not limited to, teaching materials, computer software and hardware, electronic equipment, and other equipment, outside of the scope of the employee’s employment is prohibited without the express written consent of the superintendent. The district will consider the use of its property without such consent, even if the user intends to return the property to the district, to be willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.

Contracts and Business Arrangements

1. Contracts with Board Members

All employees are expected to be aware of the provisions of 70 O.S. §5-124 with respect to prohibited contracts with members of the board of education. No employee shall enter into a contract or business relationship with any member of the board of education without notifying the superintendent in writing. If the superintendent determines that such business relationship or contract violates this or any other provision of law prohibiting such contracts, the superintendent may prohibit the employee from engaging in the proposed activity. Failure of an employee to comply with this provision or the directive of the superintendent shall be considered willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.

2. Disclosure of Other Contracts and Business Arrangements

In addition to the foregoing, the board of education believes that certain business and contractual arrangements by employees, although not in violation of the foregoing statute, create such a potential for conflict of interest that such contracts or relationships should be disclosed to the superintendent. The following contracts or business relationships shall be disclosed in writing to the superintendent:

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (Cont.)

- A. Any two or more district employees who together enter into any business relationship, including, but not limited to, a partnership, corporation, or lessor/lessee relationship.
- B. Any employee who has a substantial interest, directly or indirectly, in any person or entity that is providing services or sales of equipment or other goods or commodities to the district where such relationship would result in a direct or indirect monetary benefit to the employee.

Any violation of the foregoing reporting requirements will be considered willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.

3. Contracts or Employment Relationships Between Employees

District employees are not permitted to have other employees do personal errands or work for them during normal employment hours for personal gain.

District employees who hire or use the services of other district employees for personal benefit during times other than normal employment hours should do so in such a manner as to avoid the appearance that the work or employment is being done as a condition of employment or is being done during normal employment hours. Employees who hire or use the services of other employees are encouraged both to enter into such written agreements or keep such documentation as may be necessary to show that this policy is not being violated and to voluntarily disclose such written arrangements to the board of education through the office of the superintendent. Violation of this section will be considered willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.

School facilities, such as the bid assistance center, are available to the public at large. District employees who have an interest in businesses that may be using school services available to the public are encouraged to avoid situations that may cause the appearance of impropriety and are discouraged from heavy use of these types of services.

4. Other Prohibited Activities

In addition to the foregoing, the board of education prohibits any employee from receiving a monetary benefit as the result of any contract between a non-employee and the district without disclosure to the superintendent and the consent of the superintendent. Any gifts received by any employee that directly or indirectly relate to his or her employment shall be immediately reported to the superintendent. Violation of these rules will be considered willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment. Without limiting the above, examples of activities that would violate this policy include receipt of gifts or money by employees in exchange for favors or other services rendered or arrangements whereby an employee receives a portion of a full or part-time teacher's salary in exchange for promoting such person for employment. All employees should be aware that such activities may constitute a criminal violation of either state or federal law. One of the purposes of this policy is to enable the district to identify in advance any arrangements that may violate the law.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (Cont.)

Outside Activities of Full-time Employees

This portion of the policy applies to full-time employees. A full-time employee shall be construed as any teacher, administrator, support employee, or other employee contracted as a full-time employee with the district and shall include all teachers and other employees who are engaged as full-time employees for only a portion of the year because of summer vacation or any other reason. All full-time employees shall report any outside business activities or employment in writing to the superintendent. The intent of this provision is not to prohibit such activities, but to allow the superintendent to be fully aware of activities that may give rise to violations of other provisions of this policy. Violation of the reporting requirement of this section will be considered willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.

It is the express policy of the board of education that full-time employees devote their full efforts to their assigned activities during their normal business hours on the campus. Employees are prohibited from engaging in outside business activities or employment while on duty on the campus as such activity can constitute willful neglect of duty and grounds for termination of employment.