

# Policy 827: Conflict of Interest

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## *Sylvan Heights Science Charter School*

Adopted: July 16, 2018

### **Purpose:**

This policy shall affirm standards of conduct established to ensure that members of the Board of Trustees and employees of Sylvan Heights Science Charter School avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as the perception of a conflict of interest.

### **Definitions**

Confidential information shall mean information not obtainable from reviewing a public document or from making inquiry to a publicly available source of information.

Conflict or Conflict of interest shall mean use of authority of office or employment by a member of the Board of Trustees or School employee, or use of any confidential information received through his or her holding public office or employment, to obtain the private pecuniary benefit of him or herself, a member of his/her immediate family, business with which she or he or a member of his/her immediate family is associated. The term does not include an action having a de minimis economic impact, which can also affect to the same degree a class consisting of the general public or a subclass consisting of an industry, occupation, or other group which includes the member of the Board of Trustees, a School employee, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which she or he or a member of his or her immediate family is associated. De minimis economic impact shall mean an economic consequence which has an insignificant effect.

Financial interest shall mean any financial interest in a legal entity engaged in business for profit which comprises more than five percent (5%) of the equity of the business, or more than five percent (5%) of the assets of the economic interest in indebtedness.

Honorarium shall mean payment made in recognition of published works, appearances, speeches and presentations, and which is not intended as consideration for the value of such services; which are nonpublic occupational or professional in nature. The term does not include tokens presented or provided which are of de minimis economic impact.

Immediate family shall mean: a parent, spouse, child, brother, or sister, .

Business partner shall mean a person who, along with another person, plays a significant role in owning, managing, or creating a company in which both individuals have a financial interest in the company.

Public Employee will mean any individual employed by the district who is responsible for taking or recommending official action of a nonministerial nature with regard to: (1) contracting or procurement; (2) administering or monitoring grants or subsidies; (3) planning or zoning; (4) inspecting, licensing, regulating, or auditing any person; or (5) any other activity where the official action has an economic impact of greater than a de minimis nature on the interests of any person. The term shall not include individuals who are employed by the district in teaching as distinguished from administrative duties. As used in this policy, the word “employee” shall refer to this definition of “public employee.”

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

Each employee and member of the Board of Trustees shall be responsible to maintain standards of conduct that avoid conflicts of interest. The Board prohibits members of the Board of Trustees and School employees from engaging in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest as outlined in this policy.

### **Guidelines**

All members of the Board of Trustees and employees of Sylvan Heights Science Charter School shall be provided with a copy of this policy and acknowledge in writing that they have been made aware of it. Additional training shall be provided to designated individuals.

### **Disclosure of Financial Interests**

No Board member shall be allowed to take the oath of office or enter or continue upon his or her duties, nor shall she or he receive compensation from public funds, unless she or he has filed a statement of financial interests as required by law.

The School solicitor and designated School employees shall file a statement of financial interests as required by law and regulations.

### **Standards of Conduct**

Sylvan Heights Science Charter School maintains the following standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees and Board members engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.

No employee or Board member may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award. If she or he has a real or apparent conflict of interest as defined above, as well as any other circumstance in which the employee, Board member, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her business partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of them, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

The School shall not enter into any contract valued at \$500 or more with a Board member or employee, or his or her spouse or child, or any business in which the person, or his or her spouse or child is

associated, nor in which the person or spouse, or child, or business with which associated is a subcontractor, unless the Board has determined it is in the best interests of the School to do so. The contract has been awarded through an open and public process, including prior public notice and subsequent public disclosure of all proposals considered and contracts awarded. In such a case, the Board member or employee shall not have any supervisory or overall responsibility for the implementation or administration of the contract.

When advertised formal bidding is not required or used, an open and public process shall include at a minimum:

1. Public notice of the intent to contract for goods or services;
2. A reasonable amount of time for potential contractors to consider whether to offer quotes; and
3. Post-award public disclosure of who made bids or quotes and who was chosen.

Prior to the vote being taken, any board member or employee, who in the discharge of his or her official duties would be required to vote on a matter that would result in a conflict of interest shall publicly announce and disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record.

No public official or public employee shall accept an honorarium.

Board members and employees may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts, unless the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. Gifts of a nominal value may be accepted in accordance with Board policy.

### **Improper Influence**

No person shall offer or give to a Board member, employee, or nominee or candidate for the Board, or a member of his or her immediate family or a business with which she or he is associated, anything of monetary value, including: a gift, loan, political contribution, reward, or promise of future employment based, on the offeror's or donor's understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment of the Board member, employee, or nominee or candidate for the Board would be influenced thereby.

No Board member, employee, or nominee or candidate for the Board shall: solicit or accept anything of monetary value, including a gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment, based on any understanding of that Board member, employee, or nominee or candidate that the vote, official action, or judgment of the Board member, employee, or nominee or candidate for the Board would be influenced thereby.

### **Organizational Conflicts**

Organizational conflicts of interest may exist when the School may be unable or appear to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. An organizational conflict could be due to the School's relationship with a subsidiary, affiliated, or parent organization that is a candidate for award of a contract in connection with federally funded activities. In the event of a

potential organizational conflict, the potential conflict shall be reviewed by the Principal/CAO or designee to determine whether it is likely that the School would be unable or appear to be unable to be impartial in making the award. If such a likelihood exists, this shall not disqualify the related organization; however, the following measures shall be applied:

1. The organizational relationship shall be disclosed as part of any notices to potential contractors;
2. Any School employees or officials directly involved in the activities of the related organization are excluded from the selection and award process;
3. A competitive bid, quote, or other basis of valuation is considered; and
4. The Board has determined that contracting with the related organization is in the best interests of the program involved.

### **Reporting**

Any perceived conflict of interest that is detected, or suspected by any employee or third party shall be reported to the Principal/CAO. If the Principal/CAO is the subject of the perceived conflict of interest, the employee or third party shall report the incident to the Board President.

Any perceived conflict of interest of a Board member that is detected or suspected by any employee or third party shall be reported to the Board President. If the Board President is the subject of the perceived conflict of interest, the employee or third party shall report the incident to the Principal/CAO, who shall report the incident to the solicitor.

No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of conflicts of interest.

### **Investigation**

Investigations based on reports of perceived violations of this policy shall comply with state and federal laws and regulations. No person sharing in the potential conflict of interest being investigated shall be involved in conducting the investigation or reviewing its results.

In the event an investigation determines that a violation of this policy has occurred, the violation shall be reported to the federal awarding agency in accordance with that agency's policies.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

If an investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the School shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. School staff shall document the corrective action taken and, when not prohibited by law, inform the complainant.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge, fines, and possible imprisonment. Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with Board policies, procedures, and state and federal laws.

References:

State Ethics Commission Regulations - 51 PA Code Sec. 15.2

Public Official and Employee Ethics Act - 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 1101 et seq.

Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards, Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations - 2 CFR §200.318