

ETHICS CODE: General

The Baltimore County Public Schools are committed to promoting and practicing moral principles and values in both the delivery of instruction and the delivery of support services. Consistent with this conviction, the school system's "Precepts, Beliefs, and Values" and local public ethics laws in accordance with the State Ethics Commission, the Ethics Code establishes guidelines of ethical and professional conduct. This Code formally acknowledges the school system's commitment to its institutional responsibility to the students, parents, and the community. It advocates positive behavior and the avoidance of impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

This Code establishes recommended behavior for all instructional and non-instructional personnel, administrative and supervisory personnel, Board of Education members, consultants, and volunteers (from this point forward referred to as Board members, employees and/or volunteers). All of these individuals shall be subject to this Code, which addresses the school system's commitment that all lead and teach by example and serve as role models for students.

No code can delineate the appropriate ethical behavior for every situation with which the school system's personnel will be confronted. It is important, therefore, that whenever a difficult situation arises which is not directly addressed by this Code, the individual seek counsel from colleagues, administrators, and the Ethics Review Panel as established by the Code. However, many individuals will be called upon to make decisions in which time precludes consultations. In such cases, the individual must rely on his or her good judgment, recalling that the school system's ethical commitment is rooted in fairness, equity, and integrity.

One of the most important elements of this Code is promoting the worth and dignity of all individuals in compliance with the Board of Education's non-discrimination policy. A second key element of this Code is open communication. Business-related transactions in which individuals engage must be correctly documented and reported. Every individual covered by this Code must behave as if public scrutiny of his or her actions would be welcome.

The Code provides specific direction in the following areas: Gifts; Conflicts of Interest; Financial Disclosure; Lobbying Disclosure; Creation of an Ethics Review Panel.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, State Government Article, §§15-101,  
15-811 to 15-815  
COMAR 19A.05

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 4002, Precepts, Beliefs, and Values of  
the Baltimore County Public Schools  
Board of Education Policy 3127, Travel  
Board of Education Policy 3209, Purchasing Principles

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