

Policy

BANNING GIFTS OR ANYTHING OF VALUE TO BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

The Board of Education wishes to maintain honest and ethical practices and wishes to avoid any appearance of impropriety or favoritism in its practices. Therefore, the Board of Education prohibits the acceptance of gifts to Board members and to school district employees.

1. No Board member or school district employee shall solicit, receive, or agree to receive any compensation, reward, employment, gift, meal, honorarium, travel, reimbursement, or any other thing of value from any person, firm, corporation, association, partnership, or business that is the recipient of, or a potential bidder for, or applicant for any contract, professional services contract, or purchase order from the school district. A certification by all signatories who are school district employees to any business transactions that the contract, agreement, or purchase order has been executed consistent with the term of NJAC 6A:23A-6.3.
2. Board members who violate the terms of this policy are subject to consequences as provided by civil and or criminal statutes.
3. School district employees who violate the terms of this policy are subject to consequences which include suspension or termination from employment, the withholding of annual increments, or demotion.
4. The Board of Education shall consider as always welcome and, in most cases more appropriate, the writing of letters to Board members and/or staff expressing gratitude or appreciation.
5. The Board of Education directs the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary to file this policy with the New Jersey Secretary of State, to inform vendors of the requirements of this policy, and to keep the school board informed about the implementation of this policy.

Acceptance of Meals and Entertainment at Conferences

School officials are reminded of the School Ethics Commission's policy guideline regarding acceptance of meals and entertainment at conferences.

Policy Guideline #1, issued shortly after the School Ethics Act went into effect in 1992, prohibits school officials and their immediate family members from accepting offers of meals and entertainment that are limited to clients and customers of a vendor. In establishing this guideline, the Commission stated:

“The Commission has concluded that the hospitality and amenities extended to individual clients and customers are offered for the express purpose of creating a feeling of good will which it is hoped will influence the recipient to favorably consider their project or retain their professional services. For the school official this offer falls within the ambit of the acceptance of a gift or favor designed to influence the school official in the discharge of his or her official duties.”

The School Ethics Commission concluded that such offers of meals or entertainment made by vendors to school officials would constitute a violation of state law (NJSA 18A:12-24(e)), except that vendors could provide hospitality suites or receptions that are open to all persons attending a conference, convention or workshop.

The School Ethics Act defines “school officials” as board members, charter school trustees, school administrators, and officers and professional staff of the New Jersey School Boards Association. In addition, a “member of the immediate family” is defined as the spouse or dependent child of a school official residing in the same household.

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Legal Reference: NJSA 18A:12-21 through NJSA 18A:12-26