

Board members and employees are expected to be honest and ethical in the performance of their duties and to comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, policies, and regulations. The board encourages employees to report possible financial improprieties, ethical violations, and other illegal practices and intends that employees who report such matters in good faith will not be subject to retaliation or other adverse employment consequences.

If an employee reasonably believes that (1) there has been a violation of federal, state, or local law, policy, or regulation, public policy, or an individual's ethical duties and (2) the violation is due to a practice, policy, act, or omission of the board of education, an individual board member, a school system employee, or an entity/person with whom the school system has a business relationship, the employee should report that matter in accordance with policy 1750/7220, Grievance Procedure for Employees, , unless a policy with a more specific reporting or complaint procedure applies. Any complaint alleging a violation by the superintendent or the board should be filed with the board chair for investigation. The board chair will report the complaint to the board, and the board will authorize a prompt and thorough investigation or other action as necessary.

The board prohibits and will not tolerate any form of reprisal, retaliation, or discrimination against any employee who (1) in good faith, has made or intends to make a report of wrongdoing described in this policy; or (2) has refused to carry out a directive which may constitute a violation of federal, state, or local law, policy or regulation, or poses a substantial or specific danger to public health and safety.

To be protected by this policy, employees who report violations or suspected violations must be acting in good faith based on a reasonable belief that the reported information represents an unlawful activity, policy, or practice. The protection extends to those whose allegations are made in good faith but prove to be mistaken. The board reserves the right to discipline employees who know or have reason to believe that the report is inaccurate. Further, except as otherwise required by law, the provisions of this policy apply only to those situations in which an employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy or practice to the attention of school officials or the board and provides school officials or the board with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. If necessary, school officials or the board may specify reasonable steps to protect the complaining employee from retaliation.

Each employee shall receive a copy of this policy and sign a statement verifying his or her receipt and understanding of this policy.

Legal References: Sarbanes-Oxley Act, 18 United States Code § 1513(e); G.S. 115C-335.5; 126-5(c5), -84, -85, -86, -87, -88

Cross References: Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 1710/4020/7230), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 1726/4036/7237), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 1730/4022/7231), Grievance Procedure for

Employees (policy 1750/7220), Code of Ethics for School Board Members (policy 2120), Board Member Conflict of Interest (policy 2121), Ethics and the Purchasing Function (policy 6401/9100), Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace (policy 7232), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Conflict of Interest (policy 7730)

Adopted: August 18, 2008

Revised: May 17, 2010; July 11, 2016; November 9, 2020