

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Governing Board desires to maintain the highest ethical standards and help ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the district and the public. In accordance with law, Board members and designated employees shall disclose any conflict of interest and, as necessary, shall abstain from participating in the decision.

*(cf. 9005 - Governance Standards)*

The Board shall adopt a resolution that specifies the terms of the district's conflict of interest code, the district's designated positions, and the disclosure categories required for each position.

Upon direction by the code reviewing body, the Board shall review the district's conflict of interest code and submit any changes to the code reviewing body.

When a change in the district's conflict of interest code is necessitated due to changed circumstances, such as the creation of new designated positions, changes to the duties assigned to existing positions, amendments, or revisions, the amended code shall be submitted to the code reviewing body within 90 days. (Government Code 87306)

When reviewing and preparing the district's conflict of interest code, the Superintendent or designee shall provide officers, employees, consultants, and members of the community adequate notice and a fair opportunity to present their views. (Government Code 87311)

*(cf. 9320 - Meetings and Notices)*

Board members and designated employees shall annually file a Statement of Economic Interest/Form 700 in accordance with the disclosure categories specified in the district's conflict of interest code. A Board member who leaves office or a designated employee who leaves district employment shall, within 30 days, file a revised statement covering the period of time between the closing date of the last statement and the date of leaving office or district employment. (Government Code 87302, 87500)

*(cf. 4117.2/4217.2/4317.2 - Resignation)*

*(cf. 9222 - Resignation)*

**Conflict of Interest under the Political Reform Act**

A Board member or designated employee shall not make, participate in making, or in any way use or attempt to use his/her official position to influence a governmental decision in which he/she knows or has reason to know that he/she has a disqualifying conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if the decision will have a "reasonably foreseeable

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (continued)

material financial effect" on one or more of the Board member's or designated employee's "economic interests," unless the effect is indistinguishable from the effect on the public generally or the Board member's or designated employee's participation is legally required. (Government Code 87100, 87101, 87103; 2 CCR 18700-18709)

A Board member or designated employee makes a governmental decision when, acting within the authority of his/her office or position, he/she votes on a matter, appoints a person, obligates or commits the district to any course of action, or enters into any contractual agreement on behalf of the district. (2 CCR 18702.1)

A Board member who has a disqualifying conflict of interest on an agenda item that will be heard in an open meeting of the Board shall abstain from voting on the matter. He/she may remain on the dais, but his/her presence shall not be counted towards achieving a quorum for that matter. A Board member with a disqualifying conflict of interest shall not be present during a closed session meeting of the Board when the decision is considered and shall not obtain or review a recording or any other nonpublic information regarding the issue. (2 CCR 18702.1)

**Additional Requirements for Boards that Manage Public Investments**

A Board member who manages public investments pursuant to Government Code 87200 and who has a financial interest in a decision shall, upon identifying a conflict or potential conflict of interest and immediately prior to the consideration of the matter, do all of the following: (Government Code 87105; 2 CCR 18702.5)

1. Publicly identify each financial interest that gives rise to the conflict or potential conflict of interest in detail sufficient to be understood by the public, except that disclosure of the exact street address of a residence is not required.
2. Recuse himself/herself from discussing and voting on the matter, or otherwise acting in violation of Government Code 87100. The Board member shall not be counted toward achieving a quorum while the item is discussed.

However, the Board member may speak on the issue during the time that the general public speaks on it and may leave the dais to speak from the same area as members of the public. He/she may listen to the public discussion of the matter with members of the public.

3. Leave the room until after the discussion, vote, and any other disposition of the matter is concluded, unless the matter has been placed on the portion of the agenda reserved for uncontested matters.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (continued)

If the item is on the consent calendar, the Board member must recuse himself/herself from discussing or voting on that matter, but the Board member is not required to leave the room during consideration of the consent calendar.

4. If the Board's decision is made during closed session, disclose his/her interest orally during the open session preceding the closed session. This disclosure shall be limited to a declaration that his/her recusal is because of a conflict of interest pursuant to Government Code 87100. He/she shall not be present when the item is considered in closed session and shall not knowingly obtain or review a recording or any other nonpublic information regarding the Board's decision.

*(cf. 3430 - Investing)*

**Conflict of Interest under Government Code 1090**

Board members, employees, or district consultants shall not be financially interested in any contract made by the Board on behalf of the district, including in the development, preliminary discussions, negotiations, compromises, planning, reasoning, and specifications and solicitations for bids. If a Board member has such a financial interest, the district is barred from entering into the contract. (Government Code 1090; *Klistoff v. Superior Court*, (2007) 157 Cal.App. 4th 469)

A Board member shall not be considered to be financially interested in a contract if his/her interest is a "noninterest" as defined in Government Code 1091.5. One such noninterest is when a Board member's spouse/registered domestic partner has been a district employee for at least one year prior to the Board member's election or appointment. (Government Code 1091.5)

A Board member shall not be considered to be financially interested in a contract if he/she has only a "remote interest" in the contract as specified in Government Code 1091 and if the remote interest is disclosed during a Board meeting and noted in the official Board minutes. The affected Board member shall not vote or debate on the matter or attempt to influence any other Board member to enter into the contract. (Government Code 1091)

Even if there is not a prohibited conflict of interest, a Board member shall abstain from voting on personnel matters that uniquely affect his/her relatives. However, a Board member may vote on collective bargaining agreements and personnel matters that affect a class of employees to which his/her relative belongs. Relative means an adult who is related to the Board member by blood or affinity within the third degree, as determined by the common law, or an individual in an adoptive relationship within the third degree. (Education Code 35107)

A relationship within the third degree includes an individual's parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles,

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (continued)

nieces, nephews, and the similar family of the individual's spouse/registered domestic partner unless the individual is widowed or divorced.

### **Common Law Doctrine Against Conflict of Interest**

A Board member shall abstain from any official action in which his/her private or personal interest may conflict with his/her official duties.

### **Rule of Necessity or Legally Required Participation**

On a case-by-case basis and upon advice of legal counsel, a Board member with a financial interest in a contract may participate in the making of the contract if the rule of necessity or legally required participation applies pursuant to Government Code 87101 and 2 CCR 18708.

### **Incompatible Offices and Activities**

Board members shall not engage in any employment or activity or hold any office which is inconsistent with, incompatible with, in conflict with, or inimical to the Board member's duties as an officer of the district. (Government Code 1099, 1126)

*(cf. 4136/4236/4336 - Nonschool Employment)*

### **Gifts**

Board members and designated employees may accept gifts only under the conditions and limitations specified in Government Code 89503 and 2 CCR 18730.

The limitation on gifts does not apply to wedding gifts and gifts exchanged between individuals on birthdays, holidays, and other similar occasions, provided that the gifts exchanged are not substantially disproportionate in value. (Government Code 89503)

Gifts of travel and related lodging and subsistence shall be subject to the current gift limitation except as described in Government Code 89506.

A gift of travel does not include travel provided by the district for Board members and designated employees. (Government Code 89506)

### **Honoraria**

Board members and designated employees shall not accept any honorarium, which is defined as any payment made in consideration for any speech given, article published, or attendance at any public or private gathering, in accordance with law. (Government Code 89501, 89502)

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (continued)

The term honorarium does not include: (Government Code 89501)

1. Earned income for personal services customarily provided in connection with a bona fide business, trade, or profession unless the sole or predominant activity of the business, trade, or profession is making speeches
2. Any honorarium which is not used and, within 30 days after receipt, is either returned to the donor or delivered to the district for donation into the general fund without being claimed as a deduction from income for tax purposes

Violations of this policy by employees are referred to the Board for corrective action, up to and including termination. (2 CFR 300.318(c))

*Legal Reference:*

*EDUCATION CODE*

*1006 Qualifications for holding office*

*35107 School district employees*

*35230-35240 Corrupt practices, especially:*

*35233 Prohibitions applicable to members of governing boards*

*41000-41003 Moneys received by school districts*

*FAMILY CODE*

*297.5 Rights, protections, and benefits of registered domestic partners*

*GOVERNMENT CODE*

*1090-1099 Prohibitions applicable to specified officers*

*1125-1129 Incompatible activities*

*81000-91014 Political Reform Act of 1974, especially:*

*82011 Code reviewing body*

*87100-87103.6 General prohibitions*

*87200-87210 Disclosure*

*87300-87313 Conflict of interest code*

*87500 Statements of economic interests*

*89501-89503 Honoraria and gifts*

*91000-91014 Enforcement*

*PENAL CODE*

*85-88 Bribes*

*CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 2*

*18110-18997 Regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission, especially:*

*18702.5 Public identification of a conflict of interest for Section 87200 filers*

*COURT DECISIONS*

*Klistoff v. Superior Court, (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 469*

*Thorpe v. Long Beach Community College District, (2000) 83 Cal.App.4th 655*

*Kunec v. Brea Redevelopment Agency, (1997) 55 Cal.App.4th 511*

*ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS*

*92 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 26 (2009)*

*92 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 19 (2009)*

*89 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 217 (2006)*

*86 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 138(2003)*

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (continued)

*Legal Reference: (continued)*

85 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 60 (2002)  
82 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 83 (1999)  
81 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 327 (1998)  
80 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 320 (1997)  
69 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 255 (1986)  
68 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 171 (1985)  
65 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 606 (1982)  
63 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 868 (1980)

*Management Resources:*

**CSBA PUBLICATIONS**

*Conflict of Interest: Overview of Key Issues for Governing Board Members, Fact Sheet, July 2010*

**FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS**

*Can I Vote? A Basic Overview of Public Officials' Obligations Under the Conflict-of-Interest Rules, 2005*

**INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

*Understanding the Basics of Public Service Ethics: Personal Financial Gain Laws, 2009*

*Understanding the Basics of Public Service Ethics: Transparency Laws, 2009*

**WEB SITES**

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

Fair Political Practices Commission: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov>

Institute of Local Government: <http://www.ca-ilg.org>

Policy

Adopted: August 4, 2005

Revised: August 7, 2008; November 4, 2010;

November 19, 2020

**VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Vacaville, California**