

STATE OF CONNECTICUT Department of Education

Mission Statement and Policy of Ethical Conduct

SDE Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide – through leadership and service – insight, expertise, training, encouragement and resources to assist those in the education and related communities to succeed in helping all Connecticut students become effective lifelong learners, able to reach their personal and career goals and become involved, productive, confident and satisfied members of society.

SDE Policy of Ethical Conduct

We cannot achieve our mission without the uncompromising practice of our values, one of which states our commitment to our fundamental ethical responsibility:

We conduct ourselves professionally and ethically in all situations and all settings.

As described in our detailed statement of values, this commitment has six critical elements:

- We are honest and consistent in dealing with others.
- We value, respect and protect the dignity of every Department employee and every customer.
- We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- We receive and offer constructive criticism in a spirit of mutual support.
- We acknowledge conflict openly and use interpersonal and group problem-solving skills to resolve it.
- We respect all roles in the Department and in all organizations with which we work.

Further, we acknowledge that ethical behavior has very specific definitions for public employees especially in the matter of real or perceived conflicts of interest. We are therefore committed to knowing, understanding and meeting the responsibilities described in the Code of Ethics for Appointed Public Officials and State Employees, the Department of Education policy on outside employment, and other laws, regulations and policies that may apply to us in the future. If the ethical implications of any situation are unclear, we ask for direction from the appropriate resources in the Department and/or the Office of State Ethics.

ETHICS CODE PROHIBITIONS

The ethical rules for state employees are contained in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-84 through 1-86. These sections are intended to prevent one from using public position or authority for personal financial benefit. The principal provisions of Section 1-84 prohibit SDE employees from engaging in the following activities:

1. **Outside Employment.** SDE employees are prohibited from accepting outside employment which will impair independence of judgment as to official duties or require or induce disclosure of confidential information gained while employed at the SDE.
2. **Financial Benefit.** SDE employees may not use their public positions or confidential information for the financial benefit of the individual, his or her family, or an “associated business.”
3. **Contracts.** SDE employees may not enter into contracts with the state valued at \$100 or more, unless the contract has been awarded through an open and public process.
4. **Gifts.** In general, SDE employees are prohibited from accepting any gifts from anyone doing business with, seeking to do business with or directly regulated by the Department of Education or from persons known to be a registered lobbyist or lobbyist’s representative. Lobbyist information may be obtained from the Office of State Ethics’ website at www.ct.gov/ethics.

SDE employees or member(s) of their immediate family are prohibited from accepting, directly or indirectly, any gift from the employees’ supervisor in excess of \$99.99. SDE employees or members of their immediate family are also prohibited from accepting, directly or indirectly, any gift from employees under his/her supervision in excess of \$99.99. The limit is a per-gift -- not per-year— amount.

5. **Fees/Honorariums.** SDE employees may not accept any fee or honorarium given in return for a speech or appearance made or article written in one’s official capacity. However, employees are permitted to accept necessary expenses (reasonable travel, lodging and waiver of registration fee).
6. **Political Activity.** No SDE employee may campaign for a candidate while on duty or within any period of time during which he/she is expected to perform services for which he/she receives compensation from the state; use state funds, supplies, equipment, vehicles or facilities to promote a candidate, party or issue; or use his/her state position to directly or indirectly influence any political process.

Post-State Employment. SDE employees are also prohibited from engaging in the following activities after they leave SDE employment.

1. **Confidential Information.** SDE employees shall not disclose or use confidential information gained in state service for the financial benefit of any person.
2. **Acting as a Representative.** SDE employees may not represent anyone (other than the state) concerning any particular matter in which he or she participated personally and substantially while in state service and in which the state has a substantial interest. SDE employees also may not, for one year after leaving state service, represent anyone before SDE (other than the state), for compensation, concerning a matter in which the state has a substantial interest.
3. **Employment with State Vendors.** SDE employees who participated substantially in, or supervised, the negotiation or award of a state contract valued at \$50,000 or more shall not accept employment with a party to the contract (other than the state) for one year after resigning from state service if the resignation occurs within one year after the contract was signed.

Other

- **State Equipment and Supplies.** SDE employees are prohibited from using state equipment, including telephones, computers, e-mail systems, fax machines, copy machines, state vehicles and other equipment and supplies, for personal, non-work-related purposes. Please refer to the SDE

acceptable use policies regarding Internet, e-mail and telecommunications systems, available on the SDE Intranet and on our website.

Ethics Information and Resources

A copy of this policy will be posted on the SDE website. The policy will also be provided to all individuals who interview for a position at the SDE, and will be incorporated into the orientation program for all new employees. Those leaving SDE employment will also receive a written summary of the post-state employment rules regarding ethics. Finally, the SDE will provide a copy of this policy to all vendors, contractors, and other business entities doing business with the agency.

Strict compliance with the following laws, regulations and policies is an essential aspect of employment in the Department of Education. Each employee is strongly advised to review the following ethics materials in an effort to avoid situations which present a conflict of interest or which may give the appearance of being ethically questionable.

- Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-79 through 1-89a:
www.ct.gov/ethics (Statutes and Regulations)
- An Act Creating the Office of State Ethics and the Citizens Ethics Advisory Board, Public Act 05-183:
www.ct.gov/ethics (Statutes and Regulations)
- A Guide to the Code of Ethics for Public Officials:
www.ct.gov/ethics
- DAS General Letter regarding political activities of employees:
<http://www.das.state.ct.us/HR/om/GL214D.pdf>

For further information and guidance, employees may contact the SDE Ethics Compliance Officer:

Kim Barberi
Department of Education
Bureau of Human Resources (Room G-16)
165 Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: (860) 713-6691, Fax: (860) 713-7011
E-mail: kim.barberi@ct.gov

SDE employees may also request advice about the Code of Ethics from the Office of State Ethics:

Office of State Ethics
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 263-2400
E-mail: ose@ct.gov
Website: www.ct.gov/ethics

