Hickman County Board of Education

	Descriptor Term: **Code of Ethics**	Descriptor Code: **1.106**	Issued Date: **04/03/23**
		Rescinds: **1.106**	Issued: **08/02/21**

General[1]

Board members and school district employees may not accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, money, gratuity, consideration, or favor that a reasonable person would understand was intended to influence the vote, official action, or judgment of the board member or employee in executing decisions affecting the school district. It is also prohibited for a board member's or an employee's spouse or child living in the same household to accept such items.

It shall not be considered a violation of this policy for a board member or employee to receive entertainment, food, refreshments, meals, health screenings, amenities, food, or beverages that are provided in connection with a conference sponsored by an established or recognized statewide association of school board officials or by an umbrella or affiliate organization of such statewide association of school board officials.

ETHICS COMPLAINTS

The Board may create a School District Ethics Committee (Ethics Committee), consisting of three (3) members who will be appointed to one-year terms by the Board Chair with confirmation by the Board. At least two (2) members of the committee shall be members of the Board. The Ethics Committee shall convene as soon as practicable after its appointment and elect a Chair and a Secretary. The records of the Ethics Committee shall be maintained by the Secretary and shall be filed in the Director of Schools' office, where they shall be open to public inspection.

Questions and complaints regarding violations of this Code of Ethics shall be directed to the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Complaints shall be in writing, signed by the person making the complaint, and include details as to the facts surrounding the complaint.

The Ethics Committee may investigate an ethical complaint received against a board member or employee and make recommendations to cease any activity that, in the Ethics Committee's judgment, constitutes a violation of this Code of Ethics. If a member of the Ethics Committee is the subject of a complaint, the member shall recuse himself/herself from all proceedings involving the complaint.

The Ethics Committee may:

1. Refer the matter to the board attorney;

2. In the case of a board member, refer the matter to the Board of Education for possible public censure, if warranted;

3. In the case of an employee, refer the matter to the Director of Schools/designee for possible disciplinary action, if warranted; or

4. In a case involving possible violation of state statutes, refer the matter to the district attorney for possible ouster or criminal prosecution.

POINT OF CONTACT[2]

The Board Chair shall serve as the point of contact for the Tennessee Ethics Commission. The Director of Schools shall provide the contact information to the Commission and ensure that any changes are submitted within thirty (30) calendar days.

Legal References

1. TCA 8-17-103
2. Public Acts of 2023, Chapter No. 37

Cross References

Board Member Conflict of Interest 1.107
Duties of Board Members 1.202