



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Policy bulletin

TITLE: Ethics Policies

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Office of the Superintendent

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ROUTING
Administrators
All Employees
Division Heads
Local District
Superintendents
Directors
Operation Coords.
Principals
Supervisors

POLICY: As with organizations in almost every sector of our society, the Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to cultivating ethical conduct to build trust and to improve organizational performance. It is the responsibility of *all* certificated and classified staff (including substitutes and part-timers) to be knowledgeable about LAUSD’s ethics policies and to take an active role in promoting an organizational culture that encourages ethical conduct. This bulletin provides additional information on the resources available to help district staff address ethics concerns in a proactive and transparent manner.

MAJOR CHANGES: This is a new Bulletin. This Bulletin provides information on the four ethics policies that have been adopted by the Board of Education beginning in 1998.

GUIDELINES: The following guidelines apply:

I. PURPOSE

LAUSD’s Board of Education and leadership recognize three key research findings which inform our commitment to supporting employees with the tools and resources necessary to strengthen ethical practice: 1) organizations without a strong ethical culture cannot sustain success; 2) ethics codes help to instill an ethical culture by providing expectations and guidance on standards of work-related conduct, particularly in areas not governed by law, and 3) studies estimate that the cost of ethical misconduct and fraud costs organizations *at least* seven percent of annual revenues.¹

For an organization like LAUSD with a roughly \$7 billion budget (excluding bond projects), this translates to a figure tantamount to \$500 million annually which can be better applied to benefit students. Moreover research indicates that fraud tends to increase during economic downturns due to factors of pressure, opportunity and ability to rationalize unethical or illegal behavior. Thus, strengthening the ethical culture in a school or office is especially critical in austere times when fewer resources can be devoted to internal controls.

¹ Source: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (www.acfe.org)



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II. SYNOPSIS OF EXISTING ETHICS POLICIES

LAUSD has four Board-approved ethics policies which staff should be familiar with. A brief high-level synopsis of each policy is as follows:

1. *Employee Code of Ethics* – addresses use of position, use of resources, gifts, etc.
2. *Conflict of Interest Code* – addresses conflicts, recusals, and mandated disclosure
3. *Contractor Code of Conduct* – addresses limits on working with and for vendors
4. *Lobbying Disclosure Code* – addresses limits on marketing and influence efforts

To access the above Codes, please go to the Ethics Office website at: www.lausd.net/ethics, or click the link [here](#).

III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A. School Principal/Site Administrator Responsibilities

Each school principal/site administrator has the responsibility:

1. To model ethical conduct in his or her LAUSD work.
2. To promote a culture that encourages ethical conduct by supporting staff in knowing LAUSD's ethics standards and procedures. At minimum, ethics policies and procedures should be communicated to staff via annual distribution of the Employee Code of Ethics and other ethics awareness materials (see: www.lausd.net/ethics). Other ethics policies should be disseminated as relevant (e.g. staff members who help choose products or services should be directed to review the Contractor Code of Conduct).
3. To reinforce ethical practice with training and periodic communications such as having staff take advantage of the professional development activities from LAUSD's Ethics Booster Training Kit on at least an annual basis (see "Assistance" section).
4. To hold employees accountable for ethical conduct in LAUSD-related matters by making the time and effort to recognize good ethics as well as following through with disciplinary measures when there are ethics violations.
5. To certify on the "Administrator Certification Form" that the school/work location provides staff with a copy of the Employee Code of Ethics and a training or discussion about the importance of ethical conduct on at least an annual basis.



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B. Individual Employee Responsibilities

Research shows that *employee role-modeling* of ethical conduct through: a) talking about the importance of ethics, b) honoring the public's trust and adhering to ethics standards, c) keeping promises and commitments to colleagues, students and their families and other stakeholders, and d) maintaining respectful communication has the greatest demonstrated impact on positive ethical outcomes.

As such, each district employee has the responsibility:

1. To set a good example of ethical conduct in his or her LAUSD work.
2. To be familiar with LAUSD's ethics policies and to participate in annual training activities such as the "ethics booster."
3. To contribute to proactive and transparent management of potential ethics concerns by raising matters in a respectful and constructive manner.
4. To seek guidance from a supervisor or other trustworthy source, if you are unsure of the most ethical and responsible course of action.
5. To know that you are not just a role model to your peers, but equally importantly to the students of the LAUSD.

AUTHORITY This is the policy of the Board of Education and Superintendent which is informed by existing laws, including but not limited to: California Education Code Section 44110 et seq., 44932, 49073-49079; California Government Code Sections 1090-1098, 1126, 8314, 87100-87105; 87200-87210; and Penal Code Sections 93, 115 and 424.

- RELATED RESOURCES:**
- *Administrator Certification Form.* Memorandum issued annually by the Office of General Counsel.
 - *Code of Conduct with Students – Distribution and Dissemination.* Mem-4400.0 issued by the Office of the Superintendent.
 - *Conflict of Interest Code.* Board adopted November 2002; last revised January 2009. See: www.lausd.net/ethics for more information.
 - *Contractor Code of Conduct.* Board adopted December 2000; last revised November 2006. See: www.lausd.net/ethics for more information.
 - *Employee Code of Ethics.* Board adopted September 1998; last revised February 2003. See: www.lausd.net/ethics for more information.
 - *Lobbying Disclosure Code.* Board adopted December 2000; last revised May 2006. See: www.lausd.net/ethics for more information.



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- *Whistleblower Protection Policy*. Board adopted February 2002. For more information, consult the Office of the Inspector General.

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information, please contact any of the following LAUSD resources:

- Local Superintendent or Division Head
- Local District Operations Coordinator
- LAUSD Ethics Office at (213) 241-3330

To request an Ethics Booster Training Kit for your school or office, if you have not previously received one, call the Ethics Office at (213) 241-3330 or the Stores Warehouse at (562) 654-9009. For additional ethics tools and bonus features, please visit the Ethics Office website at: www.lausd.net/ethics