

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: October 21, 2008

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 8361 – ETHICS CODE: GENERAL**

ORIGINATOR: Frances A. S. Harris

RESOURCE PERSON(S): Margaret-Ann F. Howie, Esq., General Counsel
Edward J. Novak, Esq., Associate General Counsel

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education reviews the proposed changes to Policy 8361. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the State Ethics Commission. This is the first reading.

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Attachment I – Policy Analysis
Attachment II – Policy 8361

**Policy Analysis for
Board of Education Policy 8361
General**

Statement of Issues or Questions to be Addressed

Board of Education Policy 8361 was revised to include recommendations that were made by the State Ethics Committee.

Cost Analysis and Fiscal Impact on School System

No fiscal impact is anticipated by this revision.

Relationship to other Board of Education Policies

Board of Education Policy 3127, *Travel*

Board of Education Policy 3209, *Purchasing Principles*

Board of Education Policy 4002, *Precepts, Beliefs, and Values of the Baltimore County Public Schools*

Legal Requirements

Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government §15-101, §15-811 to §15-815

COMAR, 19A.05

Similar Policies Adopted by Other Local School Systems

None

Draft of Proposed Policy

Attached

Other Alternatives Considered by Staff

None

Timeline:

First reading: October 21, 2008

Public comment: November 5, 2008

Third reading: December 2, 2008

ETHICS CODE: General

The Baltimore County Public Schools are committed to promoting and practicing moral principles and values in both the delivery of instruction and the delivery of support services. Consistent with this conviction, the school system's "Precepts, Beliefs, and Values" and local public ethics laws in accordance with the State Ethics Commission, the Ethics Code establishes guidelines of ethical and professional conduct. This Code formally acknowledges the school system's commitment to its institutional responsibility to the students, parents, and the community. It advocates positive behavior and the avoidance of impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

This Code establishes recommended behavior for all instructional and non-instructional personnel, administrative and supervisory personnel, Board of Education members, consultants, and volunteers (from this point forward referred to as Board members, employees and/or volunteers). All of these individuals shall be subject to this Code, which addresses the school system's commitment that all lead and teach by example and serve as role models for students.

No code can delineate the appropriate ethical behavior for every situation with which the school system's personnel will be confronted. It is important, therefore, that whenever a difficult situation arises which is not directly addressed by this Code, the individual seek counsel from colleagues, administrators, and the Ethics Review Panel as established by the Code. However, many individuals will be called upon to make decisions in which time precludes consultations. In such cases, the individual must rely on his or her good judgment, recalling that the school system's ethical commitment is rooted in fairness, equity, and integrity.

One of the most important elements of this Code is promoting the worth and dignity of all individuals in compliance with the Board of Education's non-discrimination policy. A second key element of this Code is open communication. Business-related transactions in which individuals engage must be correctly documented and reported. Every individual covered by this Code must behave as if public scrutiny of his or her actions would be welcome.

The Code provides specific direction in the following areas: Gifts; ConflictS of Interest; Financial Disclosure; Lobbying Disclosure; Creation of an Ethics Review Panel.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, State Government Article, §§15-101, 15-811 to 15-815
COMAR 19A.05

POLICY 8361

[Also see Policy, "Travel" and "Purchasing," Series 3000, Non-instructional Services]

RELATED POLICIES: BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 4002, *PRECEPTS, BELIEFS AND VALUES OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 3127, *TRAVEL*

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 3209, *PURCHASING PRINCIPLES*

Policy

Board of Education of Baltimore County

Adopted: 10/8/96

Revised: 8/12/97

REVISED: _____

State Ethics Commission Responses-4/21/2008:

No suggested revisions