BPS Code of Ethics

- As an employee of Brevard Public Schools, we are all bound to a common code of ethics to the extent there is no conflict with any laws, rules or governmental regulations.

- The BPS Ethics Policy is designed to create a culture of honesty and integrity that will help the District meet the goal of providing a safe environment and high quality education to all students.
Annual Ethics Statement

• All employees must annually sign an ethics statement indicating that they have had training on and understand the District’s ethics policy including their responsibility to report unethical behavior.
BPS Ethics Policy

• I have the responsibility to ask questions, seek guidance, report known violations, and express concerns concerning compliance with this policy and related procedures.
• I understand that retaliation against employees who come forward to raise concerns will not be tolerated.
• I understand that it is my responsibility to strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.
Florida Education Profession Code

The State of Florida Code of Ethics of the Education Profession imposes requirements on all educators in the state.

The District extends these requirements to all employees.
Student Potential

• The employee’s primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student’s potential.

• The employee will strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.

• It is the responsibility of all individuals associated with the District to act in a manner that will ensure the public’s trust as well as the trust of colleagues and peers.
Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which regard for a private or personal interest leads to disregard of a public duty or interest.

- Any abuse of an employee of the authority of his/her office is a conflict of interest.

- Any employee who has a financial conflict of interest must disqualify or recuse himself/herself from any decision concerning that entity including any decision to contract or not contract with the entity and the administration of the contract.
Examples of Activities that Conflict with Duties (not inclusive)

• The provision of any private lessons or services to a person whom the employee evaluates or teaches for a fee.

This includes music teachers providing music lessons for a fee, teachers tutoring students for a fee, coaches providing private lessons for a fee, if the teacher or coach currently teaches or may teach the student in the near future.
Examples of Activities that Conflict with Duties (not inclusive)

• The use, sale, or improper divulging of any privileged information about a student or client gained in the course of employment.

• This includes staff members discussing concerns informally or otherwise about a student related to discipline, attendance, or other matters with other staff members or members of the public without a “need to know.”
Examples of Activities that Conflict with Duties (not inclusive)

- The referral of a student or client for lessons or services to any private business or professional practitioner if there is any expectation of reciprocal referrals, sharing of fees, or remuneration.

- Remuneration generally means a wage or salary but may also include bonuses, gift cards, free or reduced costs for goods/tickets/travel, etc.
Examples of Activities that Conflict with Duties (not inclusive)

- This could include teachers promoting or referring students or parents to non-board approved travel companies or private gyms if the teacher expects to receive discounted travel or if the private gym is owned by the teacher or a member of the teacher’s immediate family.
Examples of Activities that Conflict with Duties (not inclusive)

- The requirement of students or clients to purchase or contract for any private goods or services provided by an employee or a business with whom the employee has a financial relationship as a condition of receiving grades, credits, promotions, a position on a team, etc.
Outside Employment

- Employees shall not hold outside employment which conflicts with their regularly assigned duties.
Financial Interest

- Employees shall not engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts, or raises a reasonable question of conflict, with their duties and responsibilities of the school system.
Financial Interest

• All employees that have a financial interest in a company that derives revenue from students where a question of conflict may arise, receive money directly from students or their parents for an activity in a private capacity similar to the employees’ position with the district, must complete and properly submit the “Ethical Standards Questionnaire” and/or the “Request for Dual Employment/Outside Activity.” The ethics commitment will then consider the employee request and render a decision to allow or disallow the employee from moving forward with the activity. Forms available on the ethics webpage.
Use of Information

• Employees shall not disclose or use any information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of their official position with the District for their own personal gain or benefit or the personal gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.

• Employees shall not corruptly use, or attempt to use, their official position or any property or resources of the District or perform their duties in such a manner to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for themselves or others.
Gifts

- Gifts are defined as the transfer, directly or indirectly, of any item, service, or thing, regardless of form, from any entity related to the employee’s employment with the District or seeking to influence any business related function of the employee.
Gifts (cont’d)

• Members of the support staff may accept gifts of nominal value in circumstances not related to employment, service, or act to influence judgment. Examples would be a personal gift for a birthday or holiday celebration, or students presenting gifts to teachers during the holiday season.

• The District defines "nominal value" as $50.00 or less.

• Gifts in excess of $50.00 in value must be reported via Notification of Acceptance of Gift form.
Personal Advertisements

- Employees shall not advertise business or professional activities on Board property or use school or work hours or district property to promote personal enterprises or to campaign or raise money for any candidates for political office.
- This includes providing access to an outside entity without requiring the entities to follow the requirements of Board Policy 7510-Use of District Facilities
Conduct Regarding Students

Every employee shall:

• Not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
Conduct Regarding Students (cont’d)

• Protect the student from conditions harmful to learning, mental, physical health and or safety;

• Not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning;

• Not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view;
Conduct Regarding Students (cont’d)

• Not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student’s academic program;

• Not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement;

• Not intentionally violate or deny a student’s legal rights;
Conduct Regarding Students (cont’d)

• Not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage; and/or

• Keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service; unless discourse serves professional purposes or is required by law.
Reporting Violations
633-1000, ext 170

- *Retaliation against employees who raise ethical concerns is prohibited.*
- Director of Ethics: Carol Kindt
- An ethics complaint is a formal allegation of violation of District policy
- All violations must be reported
  - Complaints can be done by phone or through the ethics complaint form found on the District web-site.
  - Must be filed within 30 days of the alleged misconduct.
Ethics Query

• A query can be about a hypothetical situation and is an anonymous means for inquiring whether or not a practice warrants filing a complaint.

• May be sent via courier or mail to:
  ▫ Director of Ethics
    2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
    Viera, FL  32940

Or via confidential letter, phone call or email to the Director of Ethics (Kindt.Carol@BrevardSchools.org)
Employment Screening

Employment screening for an instructional or administrative position that has direct contact with students must include:

- The Professional Practices Database of Disciplinary Actions
- Teacher Certification Database
- Reference check from candidate’s previous employer
Employment Screening (cont’d)

- Administrators offering a position **must document** the results from each step in employment screening.

- If unable to contact the candidate’s previous employer, the district must document the efforts to contact the employer.
Immediate Suspension

- If alleged misconduct affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, the district school superintendent must IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND the accused WITH PAY and assign to a position not requiring direct contact with students.
Notice of Reporting Misconduct

• Each school must post on its website and at a prominent place at each school site the policies and procedures for reporting misconduct, the contact person to whom a report should be made, and the penalties for failure to report misconduct or abuse.
DOE Sample Notices

Sample notices are posted at:

www.myfloridateacher.com

under the link “Ethics in Education Resources.”

BPS Ethics Website

http://www.edline.net/pages/Brevard_County_Schools/Departments/Departments__K-Z/HumanResources/Ethics