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Integrity Insights

Office of Professional Responsibility

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Meet the OPR Staff

Cynthia “Cindy” McAlister, Inspector

Cindy has 23 years of federal law enforcement experience as an Internal Revenue Services Special Agent. In that capacity, she planned, organized, and conducted numerous complex, multi-agency fraud investigations. Additionally, Cindy revised two I.R.S. manuals for use by I.R.S. Special Agents. One manual outlined procedures for writing investigative reports, while the other outlined a process for reviewing criminal investigative reports. Having started as a high school intern, Cindy had a total of 34 years experience with the federal government when she retired in June. Prior to becoming a special agent, she was a paraprofessional in various federal agencies. Cindy is a graduate of Texas Christian University.

Dana Davis, Investigator

Dana has 17 years of law enforcement experience. Eight of those years she was with the Dallas Police Department where she conducted numerous criminal investigations. Dana worked both misdemeanor and felony fraud cases during her time with the DPD. Ms. Davis has been connected with school district law enforcement almost ten years. As a School Resource Officer in Southlake, she served as liaison for the Southlake DPS to the Carroll ISD. She has been an administrative investigator for the Dallas ISD almost two years. Prior to moving to the law enforcement field, Dana was a fourth grade teacher at Birdie Alexander Elementary School. Dana is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University. She received a Masters of Liberal Arts from SMU.

Chris Lyle, Investigator

Prior to coming to Dallas ISD, Mr. Lyle was an Accountant with the Houston ISD. Upon moving to the district, he changed career fields and began his work in the law enforcement arena. For seven years, Chris was a peace officer in the district's Police and Security Services Department. While there, he earned certification as a Master Peace Officer. For the past ten years, Chris has been in investigations and has reviewed alleged violations of district policy and procedures for two of the district departments. Chris is a 1985 graduate of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He earned an M.B.A. from Sam Houston State University in 1992.

To contact Cindy, Dana, Chris or other members of the staff of the Office of Professional Responsibility call (972) 925-8850.

Embodying Ethics

Coach Jones, the varsity football coach, has been instrumental in obtaining monetary support for the team from many major corporations. This year one of the supporters donated shoes and jackets for each of the football players. Coach Avery, the new basketball coach, shares an office with Coach Jones. He was in the office when representatives of the corporation came to the campus to discuss the donation and shared in the excitement about the school receiving it.

Recently, Coach Avery found a flyer that Coach Jones distributed to all the football team requesting “cash” payments for the shoes and jackets. Avery has been in the locker room when players paid for and received the items. Coach Avery has also watched Coach Jones place the money in his wallet and has learned that Jones has been keeping all the funds rather than turning them in to the office.

Although Coach Avery knows Coach Jones and the athletic director have a close relationship, he decides it would be a good idea to talk with the AD. Coach Avery goes to visit the athletic director and reports all he knows. After listening to the story, the athletic director gives Coach Avery a directive to ignore the situation and keep his mouth shut.

Thirty minutes after Avery returns his office, he confronts Coach Jones about taking money for donated equipment. Coach Jones listens and then offers Coach Avery a proposition--if he will keep quiet, he can have half of the money.

What should Coach Avery do?

1. The athletic director is his supervisor. He should comply with his directive.
2. Agree to keep quiet. After all, he could use the money to purchase things the basketball program needs.
3. Report the situation to the principal and inform him or her of the athletic director's directive.

See the bottom of page 3 for the answer.

Past and Present Ethical Thinking

I have seen many things happen, but the fact remains that human life is presented to us as a simple choice between right and wrong.

Attributed to Winston Churchill

Dallas ISD Policy You Need to Know

Do you know why you must complete a Family Relationship Form when you apply for a new position, get a promotion, or transfer from one department to another? The district has a nepotism policy that excludes board member's relatives from employment and that may impact the assignment of individuals whose relatives are also employed by the district.

According to policy DBE (Legal), "No person shall be employed in the District who is related to a member of the Board by blood (consanguinity) within the third degree, or by marriage (affinity) within the second degree. "Family", in this context, is defined as spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, mother and/or father in law, and sister and/or brother in law."

DBD (Local) outlines the parameters for family members who are district employees. "In so far as possible, relatives who are employed by the District shall be assigned to different worksites. In all cases, family members shall not be in a direct supervisor/subordinate relationship." The policy goes on to say, "No District employee shall make hiring decisions or recommendations regarding employment of, nor shall supervise, a person to whom the employee is related."

To read the two policies, DBE (Legal) and DBD (Local), visit the Board Policy page on the district's Web site.

Integrity in the Headlines

HOUSTON, TX - A judge declared a mistrial Friday in the case of Texas Southern University's former president Priscilla Slade after a jury said it couldn't decide if she misspent school funds to lavishly decorate her homes.

From the Associated Press

WASHINGTON, DC - Former charter school executive Brenda Belton was able to steal or illegally steer to friends more than \$800,000 over three years because of nearly nonexistent oversight by an inattentive school board, an 18-month criminal investigation found.

From the Washington Post

History and Ethics

Classroom climate and corporate culture are two sides of the same coin separated only by environment. In schools, a good teacher establishes a positive classroom climate. Routines are established, communication is open and respectful, the environment is inviting and safe for learning and students understand the teacher's expectations. In business, a good leader develops a positive, ethical culture. The workforce

knows their role in meeting the corporate purpose, communication lines are open, the work environment is safe, and policy and value statements outline the expectations for appropriate behavior.

As employees of a school district, all of us have seen or experienced a negative classroom climate. As observers, most of us have watched with dismayed outrage as the media detailed the disastrous results of the breakdown or absence of an ethical corporate culture.

The most notable breakdown of corporate culture in recent history occurred in Houston when Enron went bankrupt and became a business school example of what not to do. Corporate greed, leading to dishonesty was cited as a main reason for their downfall.

Enron's culture emphasized making huge amounts of money. The company hired the best and brightest it could find from the nation's top graduate schools. The company demanded immediate success and high profits. Employees who conformed to the Enron way were promoted, while those who questioned the ethics of certain deals were penalized and terminated. Group think was encouraged and an internal rule of "no bad news" dominated corporate life. Image was important and the company spent large sums of money to maintain and promote itself. The year the company went bankrupt, \$1.5 million had been set aside for a Christmas party at Enron Field.

Communication lines were closed during the financial and ethical death spiral. Policy changes would be distributed via memo. Managers were seldom available to answer questions about the changes or to provide any meaningful follow up. Toward Enron's end, employees voiced the need to just see or hear from Ken Lay. They wanted the assurance they had gained from his leadership in the past.

The company had a 65-page Code of Conduct. However, ethical violations became the company norm, rather than the exception. The conflict of interest provision of the code was suspended by both the company and its board of directors to allow a top financial officer to serve as president of one of their partner companies. At one point, the CEO held a celebration for an employee who broke the rules. The accounting division assisted in creating false earning statements to help the company acquire and keep shareholders. The company hired and paid the firm responsible for auditing its financial records; even though the firm was also an Enron vendor. In the company's last days, the employee retirement fund was dissolved, but the company's leaders paid themselves bonuses.

The breakdown of ethics at Enron allowed the leadership to lie, cheat, and steal the company into bankruptcy. Employees knew something was wrong and many witnessed and participated in the wrongdoing. The company, however, did not have a culture that encouraged or rewarded speaking out.



Dallas Independent School District

History and Ethics continued from page 2

Researchers have documented the relationship between a positive classroom climate and learning. The Enron story has brought the importance of building an ethical culture to the study of best practice for business leadership. Whether in the corporate boardroom or the classroom, good leaders must lay the foundational pieces that support the climate they desire.

Making Ethical Decisions



People make ethical decisions every day. However, at times, a situation presents itself that poses a decision-making dilemma. This section will feature common ethical decision-making models that may prove useful to readers when trying to address an ethical dilemma.

The *Dallas Morning News* Test is another quick ethical decision-making strategy. When you are facing an ethical dilemma and trying to make a decision, ask yourself this question, "How would I feel if I woke up tomorrow and the action I took was featured on the front page of the *Dallas Morning News*?" "Would I want the whole world to know what I did"? Once you know the answers to those two questions, move to take the appropriate action.

A Look at Our Work

Since the Office of Professional Responsibility became a fully operating department in June of this year, the staff has received 153 cases. Of these cases, full investigations have resulted in 8 exonerations.

Training Update

Now Offering: *New Hire Orientation to OPR Ethics I for New Nurses*

Coming Soon: *Ethics Update Training for Central Staff*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do you monitor our emails and computer usage?

A. No, OPR does not monitor emails nor computer usage. Should we ever need to access information from a computer, the equipment would be obtained by an investigator and delivered to our office.

Q. I was terminated because of information the district received during an annual criminal history check. How do you know it was really me?

A. We understand the importance of verifying information. Any time a criminal history check returns information suggesting a district employee was arrested, OPR conducts a follow-up investigation to verify the individual's identity.

Q. Am I still under investigation?

A. OPR's policy is not to comment on current investigations. However, if you know that you were once the subject of an investigation you may take the following steps to determine if the investigation is complete: 1) email OPR from your DISD Groupwise account or 2) visit our office.

Contact Us For Questions or Concerns About Employee Ethics or Integrity

Student Support Services Building
2909 Buckner Blvd.
Room 804
Phone: (972) 925-8850
Fax: (972) 794-3565
www.dallasisd.org/about/integrity

Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse

Visit us in person or

Call: (972) 925-8850 or 800-530-1608

Email: OPR@dallasisd.org

Write us at: P.O. Box 181509
Dallas, TX 75218-8509

Answer: Report the situation to the principal and inform him or her of the athletic director's directive. In accordance with board policy DH (Local), "any employee who knows or has reason to know of or suspect an occurrence of fraud, misappropriation, financial impropriety, or covered activity shall immediately notify his or her supervisor. If the employee has reason to believe that the supervisor may be involved, the employee shall immediately notify the Police and Security Services Department or report the incident using the District's Fraud Hotline." Employees may also contact the Office of Professional Responsibility at (972) 925-8850.



Dallas Independent School District