



# Integrity Insights

## Office of Professional Responsibility

June 2009 • Volume 2, Issue 8

### A Note from Don Smith

This month's very short note is addressed to our campus-based staff members who are working diligently to close out the school year. Enjoy the break and come back refreshed.

### Embodying Ethics

Brian was in the classroom 21 years before thinking it might be time for him to get an advanced degree. Before making his final decision, he thought a long time about the impact it would have on his family. He knew he would have to convince his wife that going back to school and disrupting the family's life would be worth it. He assured her that having the new degree would help create more opportunities for him which would help him gain a position outside of the classroom and ultimately allow him to bring more money into the household. After hearing him out and thinking about how she would need to adjust the family's life to accommodate a father and husband who was a part time student with a full time job, she agreed to support him in his quest.

After she okayed his idea, Brian's personal struggle began. He struggled to get himself down the crowded expressway to get to the university for class after he'd taught all day. He struggled financially and developed creative methods for financing his education and paying tuition bills that were nowhere in the budget. He worked hard to balance family, work, and school time. But all those struggles ended when he walked across the stage and accepted the piece of paper that represented his new degree and the accomplishment of one of his goals. Now all he needed was a new job.

So Brian searched the district's postings and applied for any position for which he was qualified. After applying for seven jobs, he was interviewed for five. Then two weeks after his last interview, Brian got a call from someone in Human Development offering him a new job. After listening to the offer, he accepted. The new job would mean he would have to work more days each year, but he would also get a \$15,000 increase. Brian was happy, and his wife was thrilled!

The first week of the job presented Brian with a new kind of struggle--the struggle to stay awake. He was used to walking around a classroom and interacting with this students, not sitting at a desk. Periodically, he would stand up and just walk around behind his desk to keep from falling asleep.

Brian was thrilled when the head of the department assigned him a campus at which to work. He looked forward to interacting with the teachers and students. Everything went really well the first few months. Teachers at the campus on which he was based accepted him as one of their own. He enjoyed working with students and conducting therapy sessions. He liked being able to get out of the building, get in his car, and travel to the other campuses he served.

A couple of years into the job saying, "I'm on my way to one of my other campuses" became his way of leaving work early. Then when his youngest son needed braces, using the phrase became his way of leaving his job during the workday to work a second job.

He'd had a second job conducting therapy sessions for private school students for 1 year. At first, he felt badly about cheating the district out of a full days work. Then he talked himself into believing his behavior was justified. After all, nobody would be hurt. He'd be sure to serve both sets of students well. He wouldn't have taken the second job if the district paid him more. His youngest son needed braces. He would only be working the second job for a short time. And besides, several other therapists he knew were working at a private school or some other place during the work day.

Brian was sailing right along working both jobs. His family was doing well financially. No one at work suspected that anything was wrong. Then he got viral pneumonia and had to miss a month of work.

Brian's supervisor from the Central Office, Marla, came to support the campuses he served in his absence. When she walked into his office at his home campus, she was surprised to find his desk piled high with confidential student folders. It was a nuisance, but she figured she could just clean up the mess and file the folders. She'd talk to Brian about his duty to maintain student's confidentiality later.

As she worked through the files, she realized the pile contained student folders from the other district campuses Brian served. "Oh," she thought, "this is a problem." Then as she continued to clear the desk, she found a student folder from a private school, then another, and another, and another. She opened each of them and found Brian's handwritten notes on the student's progress. Brian kept excellent notes, so the service dates and times were notated in the folder. It looked like he was working another job on district time. As she looked further, she found a pay stub from the private school with Brian's name on it. There was no way to deny it--Brian **was** working another job when he was being paid to work for the district.

What should Marla do?

- Wait for Brian to return to work and ask him for an explanation.
- Contact the private school to confirm her suspicions. When she has factual information, confront Brian and ask for an explanation.
- Report Brian to the Office of Professional Responsibility.

See the bottom of the first column of page 2 for the answer.

### Past and Present Ethical Thinking

"Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.

Attributed to H. Jackson Brown, Jr.  
Author

## Dallas ISD Policy You Need to Know

Did you know you can lose the ability to access the district's electronic communication system? The *Availability of Access* section of Policy CQ (Local) states, "Access to the District's electronic communications system is a privilege, not a right. Noncompliance with applicable regulations may result in suspension or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with District policies. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution." To read the full text of CQ (Local) and learn more about the acceptable use of the district's electronic communication system go to [http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/057905/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=CQ\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/057905/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=CQ(LOCAL).pdf)

## Integrity in the Headlines

### West London

The mother of a 5 year old faces a \$7,600 fine and a year in jail if she is convicted of fraud for using a false address on an application to a leading public school.

From The Daily Mail

### Baton Rouge, LA

Members of the Louisiana State Senate approved a bill that would create a "career option" diploma to help stem the state's dropout problem. The new curriculum would allow students to take fewer academic courses and enroll in trade colleges to meet graduation requirements. Under the proposed law, students would be identified for remediation or assistance as early as the sixth grade.

From The Associated Press

### San Diego, CA

A San Diego street gang stole more than \$500,000 from the Naval Federal Credit Union using forged checks and a casino's ATM.

Lincoln Park Street Gang members would obtain personal account information and PIN numbers by paying-off credit union members. The gang members would then deposit counterfeit checks into the cooperating credit union member's bank accounts and later withdraw thousands of dollars from a cash machine at the casino.

From The Imperial Valley News

### London

An international search is underway for a New Zealand couple who became "accidental millionaires". A business owner applied for and received a \$61,000 line of credit. But rather than depositing \$61,000, the bank put \$6.1 million in his account. The business owner and his girlfriend, who is also his business partner, withdrew \$4 million and left the country. Interpol and other authorities believe the couple is in China.

From The Times Online

## Ethics, Integrity and You

The use of social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter is so widespread and commonplace people often lower their guards and leave themselves open for catastrophe. Keep these things in mind before you post:

1. Anything you post may stay on the Internet forever.
2. Your profile may be viewed by parents, students, future employers, identity thieves, stalkers, and spammers.
3. Know that once you put it on the Web, you may not be able to take it back. Even if you remove the

information from your site, someone may have seen the original post and saved the page before you removed it.

When you network, be sure to protect yourself and your reputation.

## 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 they are trying to address an ethical dilemma.

This decision making model comes from an Army ROTC text.

### Step 1: Understanding the Problem

- Review the issue again.
- Write down what you know.
- Look for key phrases.
- Find the important information.
- Tell it in your own words.
- Tell what you are trying to find.

### Step 2: Selecting Strategies

- Make a model — involve the senses.
- Make an organized list or table.
- Look for a pattern — find relationships.
- Guess (or conjecture) and test.
- Make an organized drawing or sketch.
- Work backwards — start with the consequence.
- Role-play — become an active player.
- Solve a simpler matter — try simulations.
- Use estimation.

### Step 3: Looking Back: Checking the Answer

- Does the answer make sense?
- Is it reasonable?
- Can the issue be generalized?
- Is there a pattern?
- Are there other similar situations?

## Contact Us For Questions About Employee Ethics and Integrity or to Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse

Visit us in person at 2909 N. Buckner Blvd., Room 804

Call us at (972) 925-8850

Send a fax to (972) 794-3568

Send a letter to the OPR Post Office Box:

Office of Professional Responsibility

P.O. Box 181509

Dallas, TX 75218-8509

Visit us on the Web at [www.dallasisd.org/about/integrity](http://www.dallasisd.org/about/integrity) or

at [www.dallasisd.org/spanish/about/integrity/](http://www.dallasisd.org/spanish/about/integrity/)

The correct answer is C. Martha should immediately contact OPR. Brian is committing fraud by leading district staff to believe he is working his assigned hours when he is actually working somewhere else.



Dallas Independent School District