

Section	BOD-2 Board of Directors	Approval Date	10/23/03
Policy	BOD-2.3 Ethics Policy	Latest Revision	09/28/22

BOD-2.3 Ethics Policy

The policy of the District is to maintain the highest standards of ethics from its Board members and its employees. The proper operation of the District requires decisions and policy to be made in the proper channels of governmental structure, that public office not be used for personal gain, and that all individuals associated with the District remain impartial and responsible towards the public. Accordingly, it is the policy of the District that Board members and District employees will maintain the highest standard of personal honesty and fairness in carrying out their duties. This policy sets forth the minimal ethical standards to be followed by the Board of Directors. The ethics policy for District employees is set forth in the District's Personnel Manual.

2.3.1 Responsibility of Holding Public Office

Board members are obligated to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California. Board members will comply with applicable laws regulating their conduct, including conflict of interest and financial disclosure laws. Board members will work in cooperation, to the best interest of the District, with other public officials unless prohibited from so doing by law or officially-recognized confidentiality of their work.

2.3.2 Fair and Equal Treatment

Board members will not, in the performance of their official functions, discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual preference, medical condition or disability. A Board member will not grant any special consideration, treatment or advantage to any person or group beyond that which is available to every other person or group in similar circumstances.

2.3.3 Proper Use and Safeguarding of District Property and Resources

Except as specifically authorized, a Board member will not use or permit the use of District-owned vehicles, equipment, telephones, materials or property for personal convenience or profit. A Board member will not ask or require a District employee to perform services for the personal convenience or profit of a Board member or employee. Each Board member must protect and properly use any District asset within his or her control, including information recorded on paper or in electronic form. The Board has adopted policies requiring that written records, including expense accounts, be kept in sufficient detail to reflect accurately and completely all transactions and expenditures made on the District's behalf, in accordance with the District's policy for reimbursement of expenses of Board members.

2.3.4 Use of Confidential Information

A Director is not authorized, without approval of the Board of Directors, to disclose information that qualifies as confidential information under applicable provisions of law to a person not authorized to receive it, that (1) has been received for, or during, a closed session meeting of the Board, or (2) is protected from disclosure under the attorney/client or other evidentiary privilege.

This section does not prohibit any of the following: (1) making a confidential inquiry or complaint to a district attorney or grand jury concerning a perceived violation of law, including disclosing facts to a district attorney or grand jury that are necessary to establish the alleged illegality of an action taken by the District, (2) expressing an opinion concerning the propriety or legality of actions taken by the District in closed session, including disclosure of the nature and extent of the allegedly illegal action, or (3) disclosing information acquired by being present in a closed session that is not confidential information. Prior to disclosing confidential information pursuant to (1) or (2), above, however, a Board member will first bring the matter to the attention of either the President of the Board or the full Board, to provide the Board an opportunity to cure an alleged violation.

A Director who willfully and knowingly discloses for pecuniary gain confidential information received by him or her in the course of his or her official duties may be guilty of a misdemeanor under Government Code section 1098.

2.3.5 Soliciting Political Contributions

Board members are prohibited from soliciting political funds or contributions at District facilities. A Board member will not accept, solicit or direct a political contribution from any person or entity who has a financial interest in a contract or other matter while that contract or other matter is existing or pending before the District. A Director will not use the District's seal, trademark, stationary or other indicia of the District's identity, or facsimile thereof, in any solicitation for political contributions contrary to state or federal law.

2.3.6 Revolving Door

For a period of one year after leaving office, Directors will not represent for compensation non-governmental entities before the District with regard to any issues over which the Board of Directors of which that person was a member had decision-making authority during the three years prior to leaving office.

For purposes of this section, "represent" will mean for compensation to actively support or oppose a particular decision in a proceeding by lobbying in person the officers or employees of the District or otherwise acting to influence the officers of the District.

These restrictions will not apply to representation of not-for-profit charitable entities before the District.

These restrictions may be waived in specific cases by a two-thirds vote of the District's Board of Directors.

Nothing in this section is intended or will be applied to prevent a former Director from participating in meetings of the Board in the same manner as other members of the public.

2.3.7 Improper Activities and the Protection of “Whistle Blowers”

The General Manager has primary responsibility for (1) ensuring compliance with the District’s Personnel Manual, and ensuring that District employees do not engage in improper activities, (2) investigating allegations of improper activities, and (3) taking appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions. The General Manager is obligated to operate the District according to law and the policies approved by the Board. Board members are encouraged to disclose to the General Manager to the extent not expressly prohibited by law, improper activities within their knowledge. Board members will not interfere with the General Manager’s responsibilities in identifying, investigating and correcting improper activities, unless the Board determines that the General Manager is not properly carrying out these responsibilities. Nothing in this section affects the responsibility of the Board to oversee the performance of the General Manager.

A Board member will not directly or indirectly use or attempt to use the authority or influence of his or her position for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding or influencing any other person for the purpose of preventing such person from acting in good faith to report or otherwise bring to the attention of the General Manager or the Board any information that, if true, would constitute: a work-related violation by a Board member or District employee of any law or regulation, gross waste of District funds, gross abuse of authority, a specified and substantial danger to public health or safety due to an act or omission of a District official or employee, use of a District office or position or of District resources for personal gain, or a conflict of interest of a District Board member or District employee.

A Board member will not use or threaten to use any official authority or influence to effect any action as a reprisal against a District Board member or District employee who reports or otherwise brings to the attention of the General Manager any information regarding the subjects described in this section.

Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to any action prohibited by this section may file a confidential complaint with (1) the General Manager, or (2) a member of the Board of Directors if the complaint involves the conduct of the General Manager, who will thereupon refer the matter to the full Board to investigate the complaint. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the General Manager (or the Board in the case of a complaint against the General Manager) will take appropriate action consistent with the District’s Personnel Manual and applicable law.

A perceived violation of this policy by a Board member should be referred to the President of the Board or the full Board of Directors for investigation, and consideration of any appropriate action warranted. A violation of this policy may be addressed by the use of such remedies as are available by law to the District, including but not limited to: (a) adoption of a resolution expressing disapproval of the conduct of the Board member who has violated this policy, (b) injunctive relief, or (c) referral of the violation to the District Attorney and/or the grand jury.

2.3.8 Values

Respect for each Board member’s interpersonal style will be a standard of operation. Courtesy and respect for individual points of view will be practiced at all times. All Board members shall respect each other’s right to disagree. All Board members shall practice a high degree of decorum and courtesy. When addressing the public in any way, all Board members shall make certain their opinions are expressed solely as their own, and do not in any way necessarily reflect the opinions of any other Board member or the District.

2.3.9 Interaction of the Board with Staff

The Board shall treat staff with respect and shall not abuse staff, nor embarrass staff in public. The Board members are to work through the General Manager or General Counsel on all issues, concerns and questions.

Revision History:

Revision Date	Description of Changes	Requested By
9/28/22	Added section 2.3.8 and 2.3.9	Legal Affairs Committee