

# **WESTERN GATEWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, INC.**

An Oklahoma Not-for-profit Corporation

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **ARTICLE I PURPOSES**

It is important for Western Gateway Elementary School, Inc. (WGES) directors, officers, and staff to be aware that both real and apparent conflicts of interest or dualities of interest sometimes occur in the course of conducting the affairs of the corporation and that the appearance of conflict can be troublesome even if there is in fact no conflict whatsoever. Conflicts occur because the persons associated with the corporation should be expected to have, and do in fact generally have, multiple interests and affiliations and various positions of responsibility within the community. In these situations a person will sometimes owe identical duties of loyalty to two or more corporations. The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the corporation's tax-exempt interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. **The policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations and to school boards, including (but not limited to) the Conflicts of Interest Policy of Independent School District No. 89 of Oklahoma County provided to WGES as part of its charter application process and attached here as Exhibit A.**

Conflicts are undesirable because they potentially or eventually place the interests of others ahead of the corporation's obligations to its charitable purposes and to the public interest. Conflicts are also undesirable because they often reflect adversely upon the person involved and upon the institutions with which they are affiliated, regardless of the actual facts or motivations of the parties. However, the long-range best interests of the corporation do not require the termination of all association with persons who may have real or apparent conflicts that are harmless to all individuals or entities involved.

Each member of the board of directors and the staff of the corporation has a duty of loyalty to the corporation. The duty of loyalty generally requires a director or staff member to prefer the interests of the corporation over the director's/staff's interest or the interests of others. In addition, directors and staff of the corporation shall avoid acts of self-dealing which may adversely affect the tax-exempt status of the corporation or cause there to arise any sanction or penalty by a governmental authority.

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to

the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

## **ARTICLE II** **DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1 Interested Person**

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

### **2.2 Financial Interest**

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, thorough business, investment, or family:

- (a)** An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the corporation has a transaction or arrangement,
- (b)** A compensation arrangement with the corporation or with any entity or individual with which the corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- (c)** A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Whether a conflict of interest exists is a determined both by Oklahoma law and by this Policy; a conflict under either is prohibited by this Policy. The initial determination of whether a person who has a financial interest has a conflict of interest is made by the remaining members of the Board in accordance with Article II, Section 3.2, below, in accordance with Oklahoma law.

## **ARTICLE III** **PROCEDURES**

### **3.1 Duty to Disclose**

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement

### **3.2 Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists**

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists in accordance with Oklahoma law.

### **3.3 Procedures for Avoiding the Conflict of Interest**

(a) An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

(b) The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

(c) After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement would give rise to a conflict of interest or if it is entirely in the corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is absolutely fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, the governing board shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

### **3.4 Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy**

(a) If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

(b) If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

## **ARTICLE IV RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **4.1 Minutes**

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

(a) The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest,

any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

(b) The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

## **ARTICLE V** **COMPENSATION**

No member of the governing board shall receive compensation, directly or indirectly, from the corporation.

## **ARTICLE VI** **ANNUAL STATEMENTS**

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- (a) Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- (b) Has read and understands the policy,
- (c) Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- (d) Understands that the corporation is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**PERIODIC REVIEWS**

To ensure the corporation operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

(a) Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.

(b) Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management corporations conform to the corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
**USE OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

**CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**  
**POLICY AND AGREEMENT**

I do hereby certify that the above stated Conflict of Interest Policy for Western Gateway Elementary School, Inc., as revised, was approved and adopted by the board of directors on October 21, 2020, and constitutes a complete copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy of the corporation.



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,Secretary

Date: 11-2-2020

Attachment: Exhibit A – Conflicts of Interest Policy of Independent School District No. 89 of Oklahoma County