You’re driving to a wedding. You thought the directions to the venue were clear; but suddenly nothing looks familiar. The car’s GPS doesn’t work so you drive around in circles, trying to remember the directions you heard while you watched the hands of the clock. Finally, in a moment of clarity, you remember the GPS program on your cell phone. Quickly, you re-orient yourself to your current location and arrive breathlessly just as the ceremony begins.

Like a good road map, our district’s Code of Ethics provides guidance that employees are expected to adhere to in their job performance. The policy is a navigation tool specifically designed to guide your daily decisions in the right direction. But just like the GPS on your phone or in your car, the Code of Ethics won’t help if you aren’t using it. To reap its benefits, you have to understand its content, and access it for guidance in daily decision-making.

**THE CODE OF ETHICS AS A ROAD MAP**

Our Code of Ethics outlines our district’s expectations and the responsibility of each employee for ethical behavior on the job. It summarizes the Michigan Professional Educator’s ethical standards such as: Service toward common good, Mutual Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Truth and Honesty. The Code of Ethics applies not only to employees but also to all members of the Board, and all persons who receive any direct economic benefit from the district.

The Code of Ethics also provides our guiding principles and suggests ways to apply these principles. For example, the guiding principle of Respect for Others may translate to a statement such as “we don’t use degrading or offensive language in the workplace.”

**ADHERENCE TO THE CODE OF ETHICS**

Just like the road map, the Code of Ethics is a resource. It is very important that you become very familiar with all its sections. However, it is not exhaustive, and does not address every possible situation that might generate an ethical dilemma. You should always do the right thing. In instances of complexity, our Code of Ethics provides a framework for deciding on the best course of action.

**ETHICS + INTEGRITY = SUCCESS**

Our district and your fellow employees rely on you to make the right decision.

- Negative publicity about misconduct, greed and fraud has left many people skeptical about the district’s business values. Never forget that you represent our district and that your actions impact others.

If you are a supervisor or manager:

- Consider ways to help your direct reports understand the Code of Ethics and to realize that this policy document is a resource for ethical decisions.
- Check your own behavior to be sure that you are applying the ethical standards in the Code of Ethics consistently, no matter who is involved.
- Practice ethical decision-making. Include consideration of ethics, our guiding principles, policies and laws in every decision that you make. Be a model of ethical action by ensuring that employees around you or your direct reports know that you always include ethical considerations in your decisions.

**REACHING OUR DESTINATION**

Our Code of Ethics sends a clear message about where our district is today and what our emphasis is as we move down the road toward the future. When you read, understand, and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics in your decisions, you are protecting our district’s reputation and demonstrating our core value of Integrity. If you have any doubts or questions, always ask for guidance from your direct supervisor, or a representative of the Division of Human Resources and Talent.

“**There are no short cuts to a place worth going**”

- Unknown
Q&A

I can’t find my copy of the Code of Ethics. How do I get a new one?
Contact the Division of Human Resources and Talent. This policy is also publicly available on our district website.

My work is very specialized, and I have received training on many applicable laws and regulations. What should I pay attention to: the Code of Ethics or these specialized regulations?
You need to pay attention to both! The laws and regulations that govern your work are more detailed and therefore should be carefully applied on the job. Our Code of Ethics guides your decision-making in a more generic way but is no less important. Nothing in our Code of Ethics violates the law, and vice-versa.

My job brings me into constant contact with outside vendors and suppliers. On occasion, they suggest “creative” solutions that would be good deals for our district but might be considered violations of our Code of Ethics. How do I respond to these?
Any business deal that’s a violation of our Code of Ethics is unacceptable, no matter how “creative” it is. Companies with whom we do business need to understand our commitment to integrity. The short-term benefits of unethical solutions never outweigh the long-term harm done to our district’s reputation.

I’m in a situation that doesn’t seem to be covered by our Code of Ethics. What should I do?
If you have a question that isn’t answered by our Code of Ethics, ask your supervisor. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable asking him or her about the situation, contact HR or the Office of Inspector General.