

MÓNICA GARCÍA, PRESIDENT
 MARLENE CANTER
 YOLIE FLORES AGUILAR
 TAMAR GALATZAN
 JULIE KORENSTEIN
 MARGUERITE POINDEXTER LAMOTTE
 RICHARD A. VLADOVIC



Administrative Office
 333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
 Los Angeles, California 90017
 Telephone: (213) 241-7000
 Fax: (213) 241-8442

DAVID L. BREWER III
 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

ATTENTION: SITE ADMINISTRATOR

LAUSD ETHICS
 RIPPLE EFFECT

August 30, 2007

Dear LAUSD Leader:

As those of you who attended last Friday's Annual Meeting already know, we distributed our district-wide "Ethics Booster" training for *all* employees at our Convention Center gathering. Now I am counting on your leadership to ensure that this training is delivered to each and every member of your staff, preferably by December 31st, but no later than June 30, 2008, the end of our fiscal year.

Contrary to some initial media reports, I would like to clarify that this initiative was NOT undertaken because our employees do not know right from wrong. Rather, this training is intended as a positive way for our district to help the good, hard-working employees of LAUSD in navigating the complex legal and ethical responsibilities required of us, especially as public school officials.

LAUSD is not alone in this endeavor. Today, organizations in every sector of our society are actively engaged in supporting their employees with the tools and resources necessary to strengthen ethical practice due to two key findings: 1) research shows that organizations without a strong ethical culture cannot achieve or sustain success; and 2) studies reveal that many ethical lapses actually involve an organization's best "go-to" people who become blindsided by good intentions and the pressure to perform.

Our training initiative recognizes that our staff members often come under pressure in our quest to pursue greater outcomes for our students, especially given the backdrop of socio-economic challenges, regulatory mandates and deep scrutiny with which we are confronted as a large, urban school district. The "Ethics Booster" seeks to strengthen our workplace environment, so that we are better poised to tackle these demands. Its key lesson is that we are all active participants in building the culture of success we want at LAUSD.

I am asking for a minimum one-hour commitment to have your staff watch "The Gray Zone" film and to participate in a group discussion focused around key questions and case scenarios inspired by real-life examples. For the training implementation details, please review the Facilitator's Guide in your booster kit that was distributed Friday. Additionally, while you are invited to designate a trusted, well-regarded member of your leadership team to help facilitate this mandatory training, I ask you to be the one to personally communicate the following key points to your staff:

- Each of us is a steward of the public trust needed to help students be college prepared and career ready.
- Ethics is not always cut and dry; rather an ethical choice often involves weighing competing principles.
- We should know to seek guidance if we are unsure of the ethical and responsible course of action.

If your school or office did not receive a booster kit from the Annual Meeting, please contact our Ethics Officer Yea-Lan Chiang at (213) 241-3330 to have one delivered to you. Thank you for your leadership and championship of this important training initiative. Your actions in support of ethics make all the difference!

David L. Brewer III

"The teachers, administrators, and staff of the Los Angeles Unified School District believe in the equal worth and dignity of all students and are committed to educate all students to their maximum potential."

“TWO PENCILS UP!”

Rochelle Montgomery, *Office of the General Counsel*

“TRULY BRILLIANT. A FILM OF EXTRAORDINARY VALUE.”

David Tokofsky, *Former Board of Education Member*

“A++”

Pete Ferrera, *Materials Management*

“ENTERTAINING AND INFORMATIVE! MUST-SEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT ITS BEST!”

Jim Morris, *Local District 2*

“ENLIGHTENING, THOUGHTFUL AND EASY TO WATCH.”

Roni Parker, *Secondary Counseling*

“INFOTAINMENT AT ITS BEST!”

Julian Gorgoni, *Office of Legislative and Government Affairs*

“ORIGINAL, VERY WATCHABLE AND ENGAGING.”

Alfred Rodas, *Office of the Inspector General*

“LOVED THE MOVIE! IT MADE ME THINK ABOUT ETHICAL DILEMMAS I’VE ENCOUNTERED.”

LAUSD Parent

“IT MAKES ME WANT TO BE ETHICAL.”

Anonymous

“BRAVO!”

Alan Warhaftig, *Fairfax High School*

“WHO KNEW SUCH A SERIOUS TOPIC COULD BE SO ENTERTAINING?”

LAUSD Employee

“EVERYONE SHOULD WATCH IT AND LEARN FROM IT.”

Vivian Ekchian, *Human Resources Division*

What's right is right
even if no one else is doing it

What's wrong is wrong
even if everyone else is doing it

Need guidance on an ethics issue?

- Business Integrity
- Conflicts of Interest
- Financial Disclosure
- Gifts or Honoraria
- Lobbying Disclosure
- Outside Employment
- Performance Safeguards
- Use of LAUSD Resources

Ask Ethics Helpline: 800-372-3788

on Corruption



New Ethics Rules



Leader's Briefing
"Leading with Ethics"

Ethics in Education - American School Board Journal

The news recently has been filled with reports of ethical lapses by people from all walks of public life — from journalist Jayson Blair to Enron's Kenneth Lay, from baseball legend Pete Rose to the ubiquitous Martin Luther King Jr.

Not as sexy, or necessarily even on the same scale, are the errors in judgment made by public school administrators. But in a time of intense public scrutiny, many who have authority for the day-to-day operations of school districts and school buildings — superintendents, business officials, administrators, and principals — are being accused of ethical lapses or worse. The result is often the loss of public trust — and angry calls for change.

Take, for example, these three stories from a six-week period in February and March:

- In Fort Worth, Texas, two men pleaded guilty in March to mail fraud after the school district mailed a \$600,000 check to a contractor to pay fraudulent invoices. One of the men was a builder; the other was the district's former executive director of maintenance as well as assistant athletic director. An assistant U.S. attorney prosecuting the case said the district's loss could total more than \$10 million.
- In New York City, Diana Lam resigned as the school system's deputy chancellor after trying to get her husband a teaching job without a conflict-of-interest clearance. The fallout also led to the resignation of Chad Vignola, the school system's top lawyer.
- Pennsylvania's state ethics commission found that two superintendents improperly used their jobs to earn \$172,000. The charge? The superintendents were selling their jobs to their districts to help troubled students, but they neglected to say they had developed the program themselves. Both superintendents had already moved on to administrative positions in other districts before the ethics commission report was released.

School administrators face new and complicated ethical challenges these days that can seem never ending. The challenges involve more than money and do not always result in criminal charges. Many involve collecting and reporting data on student achievement — cases where administrators' careers hinge on the result. And many of these cases, many of which involve students, are complicated as well.



Sharpen your character with ethics

Building Trust
Inside and Out

Ethics Facts:

- At least 1 out of 4 employees (26%) surveyed have personally observed misconduct in the workplace
- 1 out of 10 employees (10%) say they feel pressure to compromise organizational standards to achieve the objectives they've been given
- Pressure decreases when there is a formalized ethics program

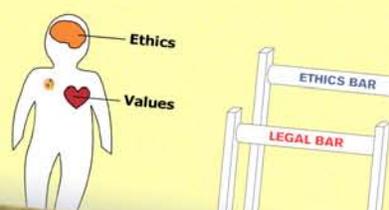
LAUSD Steps Taken

"Moving Ethics Forward"

- Examine ethical climate
- Publicly commit to being a democratic ethical organization
- Engage senior leaders in leading their people with ethics
- Hire for ethics every chance that presents itself
- Provide multiple, ongoing opportunities for ethics training (at orientation, annually and before patterns emerge)
- Include ethical conduct as a measure in performance evaluations
- Celebrate and reward good ethics
- Build robust, self-sustaining ethics infrastructure including the capacity for knowledge management in the organization
- Extend culture of ethics, accountability and integrity by encouraging leaders to demonstrate ethical practices when making decisions.



will you lead us?



Educators demanded lavish gifts parents said

By Ashley Powers
Times Staff Writer

To get proper schooling for their severely autistic son, an Irvine couple say they were forced to shower employees at his elementary school with diamond jewelry, Coach bags, Chanel perfume and other lavish gifts worth a total of \$100,000, according to a legal claim filed this month.

Thomas Lin, a pediatrician, and his wife, Liya, a homemaker, also bought and furnished a condo that a teacher's newlywed daughter and husband lived in rent-free for a year before moving out with the furniture, according to the claim filed Nov. 2 against the Irvine Unified School District.

Professional Development Model From Ethics Apprentice to Leader



*Building Trust
Inside and Out*

Ethics Apprentice

Characteristics

- Possesses personal integrity
- Has a positive attitude
- Is a good communicator
- Strives to be a high performer

Knowledge

- Understands *personal* ethical responsibilities of being a public official with our district
- Knows about LAUSD's ethical principles, requirements & rules
- Knows how to seek out guidance from trusted colleagues, managers or Ask Ethics Helpline

Competencies

- Able to apply Ethical Decision Making models (LUP, newspaper test, etc.)
- Able to navigate ethics website (www.lausd.net/ethics) for training, tools and resources
- Able to share information about LAUSD ethics standards with others

Opportunities

- Learn more about ethics by drawing upon LAUSD resources

Resources

- LAUSD Employee Resource Guide
- LAUSD Ethics Orientation
- Ethics site: www.lausd.net/ethics

Ethics Practitioner

Characteristics

- Contributes to creating a successful team environment
- Is eager to grow, develop and share
- Demonstrates thoughtful action

Knowledge

- Understands key ethics topics: e.g. conflicts of interest, use of resources, workplace excellence
- Knows to anticipate ethics issues and address general concern with appropriate safeguards
- Knows how to engage in *active* communication

Competencies

- Able to analyze root causes of perceived ethics issues
- Able to come up with solutions for resolving work concerns, including those related to ethics
- Able to influence and support peers in following rules and promoting ethics

Opportunities

- Learn more about ethics as it relates to your role within LAUSD (e.g. the code of ethics for your profession)

Resources

- LAUSD Ethics Training (online and/or annual, in-person option)
- Ethics Codes by profession: http://ethics.iit.edu/codes/codes_index.html

Ethics Resource

Characteristics

- Models ethics and integrity through consistent *visible* action
- Demonstrates accountability with same standards for self as others

Knowledge

- Understands ethical implications of decisions on an organizational level
- Knows how to encourage and support innovation within an ethical framework
- Knows how to apply or create best practices and policies
- Knows how to distinguish between promoting ethics vs. exploiting ethics

Competencies

- Able to lead team activities which promote ethical conduct
- Able to enforce as well as encourage ethical behavior
- Able to leverage knowledge to achieve team goals in the most ethical way possible

Opportunities

- Develop ethics case studies to support learning efforts
- Volunteer as an "Ethics Liaison"

Resources

- LAUSD Ethics Liaison Training
- Local ethics roundtables and forums
- Seminars on ethics & leadership

Ethics Leader

Characteristics

- Is respected for creating trust
- Recognizes that ethics *is* a part of every action, every day
- Always acts with LAUSD purpose

Knowledge

- Understands that situations may call for different modes of ethical leadership (inspiration, facilitation, persuasion, encouragement or enforcement)
- Knows how to proactively use and integrate ethics metrics in individual and organizational performance measures
- Knows how to teach ethics

Competencies

- Able to infuse ethics into organization culture, policies and practices
- Able to cultivate full potential of team(s) to achieve LAUSD aspirations
- Able to foster ethics in suppliers, contractors and partners

Opportunities

- Mentor and support next generation of LAUSD ethics leaders
- Share LAUSD's ethics achievements at local or national conferences

Resources

- Recommended Ethics Reading List
- External ethics conferences put on by ethics groups or think tanks



ETHICS TOOL

Ethics in Schools: What the Schools Can Teach Us about Nurturing Values

Patricia J. Harned and Kathryn M. Sutliff, Ethikos 2003

Two ethics scholars examine the success and lessons from the educational world's efforts to nurture ethical behavior:

When it comes to the teaching and learning of ethics, there is something CEOs can learn from elementary and secondary school teachers. Therefore, let us make this bold claim: *It is time for business to go back to school.* There are lessons to be learned and business need not learn them the hard way.

Lessons from Teachers

Over the past several years, schools have tried a number of different tactics to nurture values in their students. Through trial and error, they have discovered a number of strategies that make a difference.

The most successful strategies center around a specific set of core values—character traits that their community aspires to and chooses to focus upon. These values are made apparent in all facets of the life of the school community—posted in classrooms, illustrated in the handbook, used as points of reference for classroom management. Teachers discuss moral heroes, exemplars of these traits, who can be found in literature, history, the arts and sciences—real people, real examples from the curriculum. In an intentional way, core values become woven into the fabric of the school—infused in and nurtured by the culture of the community. Every teachable moment is seized so values can be discussed through the curriculum and reflected upon and practiced in everyday life. Student codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures refer to the core values to offer an explanation of the logic behind the rules. Behaviors consistent with the values are modeled and reinforced. Students are given time to reflect on the values and are offered numerous opportunities to put them into practice.

As a result of conscious decision, the school's core values become absolutely essential to the culture of the school community. The school knows its values. The school teaches its values. The school lives its values. And, over time, the school comes to embody its values.

At least that's how it should work—not that it always does.

The 7 Deadly Sins

Schools are not all that different from businesses in that their personnel are under great pressure to perform, with ever-increasing standards by which they are measured. With that pressure comes a temptation to cut corners, to take the easy way out—even to cheat—to get ahead. Like business leaders, teachers and school administrators pursue a goal of establishing an organizational culture that is based on a set of ethical standards so their personnel know how to handle the pressure. They aspire to ensure that the individuals within their context not only know what the right thing to do is, but that they will work hard to do it.

Archibald McLeish once said, *“There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience and that is not learning from experience.”* So, we offer the following. Read about our experiences. Learn from our mistakes. Take the gems of wisdom that we have gained. And always, always avoid the seven deadly sins of any ethics initiative.

1. See no evil, hear no evil

Whereas in schools teachers get diverted from teaching ethics because of standardized tests and budget constraints, businesses get sidetracked from making ethics a priority due to performance objectives and budget constraints.

It probably goes without saying, but ethics will always be an issue. The temptation in both schools and businesses is often to ignore ethics altogether and focus on the more “pressing issues.” In the educational world, where teachers are personally held accountable for their students' performance, educators are realizing that ethics is not only important, it is fundamental. Students who understand what it means to work hard, to have values, and to live by them perform better than those who do not. Classrooms based on values are more easily managed and are

more productive than those that are not. Ethics can sometimes seem like a step to the side from what students need to learn, but it ends up being the foundation for all other activity.

Misconduct occurs in the business context where the pressure to perform outweighs the need to conduct good business. If employees know what it means to work hard, to have values and to act in a way that is consistent with organizational standards, they will perform better than those who merely respond to the pressure to perform.

Lesson from the schools #1: *Recognize that character development has to be a priority and make the commitment to do something about it.*

2. Passing the buck

Many teachers declare that there is already too much on their plates and that it's the responsibility of families to teach ethics. Similarly, business leaders may believe that it's not their responsibility or their right to teach ethics to their employees. They are in the business of business and not the business of character development.

Whether you choose to talk about ethics or not to talk about ethics, you are sending a message about ethics. Even in schools where there is a program in place, if teachers don't address ethics, students fail to see its relevance and significance. Ethics must be integrated into real life, everyday experiences if it is going to be meaningful and authentic.

Learning ethics is a life-long process. It doesn't stop when you graduate from college. Like it or not, if you want your employees to abide by your Code of Conduct, you have to teach them how. If you have expectations, you must help them live up to those expectations. You, therefore, are as much of a teacher as the person at the front of the classroom holding the chalk and the gradebook.

Lesson from the schools #2: *Realize that you are always sending messages about what you value. Take responsibility and make the most of the opportunity presented to you.*

3. Be a fence-sitter

Where schools might purchase a pre-packaged ethics curriculum complete with values and lessons ready to teach, businesses can adopt the best practices of another organization, or 'go through the motions' of setting up a compliance program that conforms minimally to the federal Sentencing Guidelines.

As ethics grew as an important priority for schools, so too did the industry for comparing notes and providing curricular help for teachers. Conferences, seminars, and consulting organizations surfaced to assist schools with the process of implementing values into the daily activities of the school. Too many schools either purchased programs that revolved around a set of pre-determined values, or they designed programs based upon the successful efforts of others. But because the program development was inorganic, teachers found it difficult to make natural connections between daily activities and the elements of the program. Time has revealed that programs that are "off the shelf" survive only a few years. Unless values reflect the needs, interests and priorities of the school itself, they are considered by students and teachers to be "fake."

Therefore, schools have increasingly invested time in processes that identify the values they really believe in, and developed 'grassroots' programs—grown from within their organizations. These are the ethics initiatives that have the greatest impact.

While "best practices" have emerged as a useful means by which business organizations can gauge leading efforts in the ethics industry, the pressures added to ethics programs by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act will require not only that a program be in place, but that work. Financial statements are only as truthful as the people who produce them. For this reason, ethics initiatives that are based upon anything other than the culture where they're taking place will not have a strong impact.

Lesson from the schools #3: *For an ethics initiative to be successful, it has to be authentic. Take the time to create a program that meets the unique needs of your organization.*

4. One hit wonder

In many schools, teachers address a concept and never feel the need to revisit and reinforce it. Similarly, many businesses train employees in ethics and compliance and, after having them sign documentation of the training, never address the issue again.

Simply put, once isn't enough. Just as students learn their multiplication tables by repetition, values have to be constantly reinforced—every day. Many schools talk about values once a month or once a week and fail to integrate them into the culture as a whole. This approach is a mistake: not only are educators failing to take advantage of the grand opportunity to teach ethics by modeling, they are inadvertently telling students that ethics only matters for a few minutes a day, or that particular values are only important for one month a year.

No doubt, ethics training for employees is a good thing. More specifically, it's a good start. Companies that fail to integrate ethics into daily interactions, informal and formal social systems, their culture, miss the point. Ethics is not just about informing employees about the right thing to do. It is not just about guiding them towards making good decisions. It is about creating a culture where core values are known, cherished, and lived.

Students don't learn their multiplication tables overnight. They don't learn about respect during the month of October alone. Similarly, employees don't become ethical simply by sitting through three hours of training on a Wednesday morning once a year.

Lesson from the schools #4: *We learn by repetition. Talk about your values. Model your values. Reflect on your values. Again and again.*

5. Keep your head in the clouds

For years, educators tried to encourage ethical behavior by elevating students' levels of moral reasoning. They offered students the opportunity to discuss arcane cases that had no relation to their experiences and ended up having little impact on their desire to be and do good. Some ethics offices have favored a similar approach: They rely solely upon generic case studies.

Although case studies have some merit as teaching tools, they just don't go far enough. Even if one can "solve" the great riddle of a particular case, there is not necessarily a correlative action. Knowing what you should do is not the same as doing it. It isn't even the same as wanting to do it. Furthermore, esoteric cases make rationalization very easy. Students and employees can quickly say to themselves, "Well, I know what I'm supposed to do in that situation, but what's going on here at my work is not exactly the same. Therefore, I don't have to do what that case study suggested."

The simple problem with case studies is that the principles are not always generalized. The emphasis is on the situation, not the values involved. The context, not the under-girding ethics, is the issue. It becomes a matter of getting the "right" answer instead of understanding why it is right.

The use of story is vitally important for teaching ethics. But we must be careful about the stories we choose to tell. Instead of just throwing out "what if" situations, we must offer "here's how" examples. By sharing the stories of moral heroes, we are offering guidance in the most constructive way possible. Heroes are people who had to struggle with ethical dilemmas. They provide examples of the innate worth of values. They demonstrate that one can, in fact, live an ethical life. By touching the aspirational part within each of us, moral heroes challenge us to examine our lives, encourage us to be better, offer us hope, and demonstrate the innate good of a life lived well.

Lesson from the schools #5: *Use a variety of teaching tools. Real life is complicated and no one strategy can do it all.*

6. Don't look where you're walking

Many schools choose to deal with behavior by making rules—lots of rules. In a similar fashion, many businesses focus on compliance with the law. In both cases, the results are, at best, pragmatic and incomplete, and, at worst, punitive and ineffective.

Every effective teacher knows that more classroom rules do not mean more effective discipline. Students are just too creative. They will always come up with something you couldn't have bargained for. Besides, the do's and don'ts fail to tell the whole story. "Because I said so" is a valid response to some of life's issues, but should not be the foundation for one's classroom management style. Students can successfully avoid breaking the rules while not adopting ethical behavior. Even if they are not doing something wrong, they are not necessarily doing something right.

Businesses fall into the same trap. No matter how many laws and rules a business must follow, there will always be gray areas. Sometimes codes don't provide enough of a guideline. Problems come up that were not anticipated. People have to have something to look up. By focusing on core values, businesses offer the ultimate guideline: When in doubt, this is what we care about. Core values redefine the problem and refocus the possible solutions.

It's often said that if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going to end up somewhere else. Core values let your employees know where you want them to go—and that's the only way they will ever get there.

Lesson from the schools #6: *Focus on the values you want to instill. Teaching ethics is not about obeying a set of rules, it's about valuing values.*

7. Do as I say not as I do

One of the most common downfalls in the teaching of ethics comes from the “hidden curriculum.” The classic example is the teacher who gives students detentions for swearing and then uses foul language himself. The same thing happens in businesses that have a code, select core values, hold training sessions and are led by individuals who lack the values the company claims to espouse.

There is a famous poem called “Children Learn What They Live.”⁽¹⁾ It is full of examples of how the behaviors of parents and teachers impact the children around them. Children pick up on actions and attitudes much more quickly and with a greater impact than any words could impose.

And this isn’t only the case with kids. Employees look to their leaders for guidance. If CEOs and presidents focus on the bottom line, above all else, their employees will as well. If CEOs talk about ethics, but treat their employees in disrespectful ways, all of their ethics talk is worse than moot—it is hypocrisy.

But it’s not just top management that matters. Research demonstrates that immediate supervisors and peers have a powerful influence on workplace ethics. Leaders can have the best of intentions, but unless their values are voiced regularly, they are seen as ethically neutral by their employees, at best.⁽²⁾ If we really want to nurture ethical behavior and develop positive character traits, we must all be committed to being ethical role models for one another.

People learn what you tell them by your words and your choices. Living out values makes talking about them valid. Real leaders teach by example and know that their employees will be as committed to ethics as they are.

Lesson from the schools #7: Your actions speak louder than your words, so walk the talk.

Fear not

We would like to present one addendum to our deadly sins: the problem of seeing only the bad. In schools, it means obsessing about catching wrongdoing instead of pointing out the good and ethical at every teachable moment. In businesses, it means worrying so much about violations and reporting misconduct that the ethics program fails to encourage and reward ethical behavior.

Lest any of us forget, there are schools that are doing it right and that are constantly trying to do it better. And there are businesses that do successfully develop their employees’ character.

So, we issue this challenge to you: do better than we have. Learn from the lessons of schools. Learn from the mistakes of this article. Focus on the good that is there and make it better. Which brings us to our last, but, not least lesson:

Above all else, look to the best, the highest ideal. Focus on the good and work towards attaining it.

End Notes:

¹ D. L. Nolte, Ph. D. & R. Harris (1998). Natarajan, R., & Chaturvedi, R. (1983). *Children learn what they live: Parenting to inspire values*. New York: Workman Publishing.

² Trevino, L., Hartman, L. & Brown, M. (2000). “Moral person and moral manager: How executives develop a reputation for ethical leadership.” *California Management Review*, 42(4).

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