



INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Informative

To: Members, Board of Education **Date:** March 16, 2009
 Ramon C. Cortines, Superintendent

From: Yea-Lan Chiang, Ethics Officer *Yea-Lan Chiang*

Subject: Budget Impact Statement for Ethics Office

Ethics Office Functions

The Ethics Office leverages leading research and best-practices to promote an ethical culture at the Los Angeles Unified School District in order to build trust, reduce misconduct, improve employee performance and commitment, and provide good ethical role models for students. In addition to creating and delivering ethics training and tools for the Board, senior staff, employees district-wide and contractors on Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) rules and LAUSD’s four board-approved ethics policies, the Ethics Office manages LAUSD’s Ask Ethics Helpline, all state-mandated Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) filings, contractor ethics certifications, and the Lobbying Disclosure Program.

The anticipated impact of reducing staffing to the Ethics Office by 84% (from six to one) is stated below.

Impact

The Ethics Office will be more limited in the services, oversight and response times it can provide. With one staffer, coverage for the Ask Ethics Helpline (currently 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays to Fridays) will have to be curtailed. Delivery of in-person ethics trainings and creation of new trainings and tools will also be more limited. Also, it may be necessary to suspend the Lobbying Disclosure Program and to postpone the required 20% audit of Form 700s until resources can be re-established.

Projects such as developing student ethics content to help schools save money on character education programs will have to be put on hold. It will also be necessary to limit the assistance provided to other divisions (e.g. Facilities, Charter Schools, School Police...) in developing tailored ethics policies, processes or tools. Finally, if California Senate Bill 106 – mandating biannual ethics training for school officials – should be passed, one staffer will not be able to manage for LAUSD’s compliance with the new requirement.

Changes in Service

- Turn-around time on ethics advice will be delayed – especially with respect to formal, written advice
- Push will be on making information available electronically, but ability to cultivate ethical culture (by supporting and following up with stakeholders to ensure compliance with policies) will be limited.
- Emphasis will have to shift from being *proactive* through awareness measures and training to more reactive problem resolution

By Board Policy	Key Changes in Services Due to 84% Staffing Cut
Conflict of Interest Code	• Delays in processed Form 700s and Code updates; reduced oversight
Contractor Code of Conduct	• Reduced oversight on “revolving door” violations; vendor certifications
Employee Code of Ethics	• Reduced helpline hours; delays in response time for ethics advice
Lobbying Disclosure Code	• Suspended enforcement of lobbying registrations and activity reports

C: Jefferson Crain, Roberta Fesler, David Holmquist, Jim Morris and Jerry Thornton