



ADVISORY OPINION OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION ETHICS PANEL

Background: On September 10, 2025, [REDACTED], requested clarification regarding her attendance at Raptor's Customer Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting in Dallas, Texas, scheduled for November 4–6, 2025. According to the information provided, Raptor would cover all registration, travel, lodging, and related expenses for CAB members. The Prince George's County Board of Education has a contract with Raptor.

Issue Presented: Whether attendance at a vendor-sponsored event, with all travel and lodging expenses paid by the vendor with whom the district has an existing contract, is permissible under Board Policy 0107.

Decision: The Ethics Panel finds that [REDACTED] **attendance at the Raptor CAB Meeting under the described circumstances is not permissible.**

Rationale and Policy Citations:

1. Prohibited Gifts (Section IV.B.6, Board Policy 0107)

- The policy prohibits officials and employees from knowingly accepting a gift, directly or indirectly, from any person or entity that:
 - *"Is doing business with or seeking to do business with the school system or Board;"*
 - *"Is subject to the authority of the school system or the Board."*
- "Gift" is defined as *"the transfer of anything of economic value, regardless of the form, without adequate and lawful consideration."*
- Travel, lodging, and registration expenses provided by Raptor constitute a gift under this definition.

2. Appearance of Improper Influence (Policy Statement, Section I; Purpose, Section II)

- The policy emphasizes that public confidence is eroded when the conduct of public business is subject to improper influence or even the appearance of improper influence.
- Accepting full sponsorship of travel and lodging from a vendor with whom the district has existing contracts creates both the reality and appearance of a conflict of interest.

3. Exceptions Not Applicable

- While the policy allows acceptance of certain nominal items (e.g., meals consumed in the presence of the donor, unsolicited gifts under \$20), the full payment of travel and lodging expenses exceeds these thresholds and is therefore prohibited.
- [REDACTED] has not indicated that she is participating as a panelist or speaker at the Raptor CAB Meeting, so the exception in Section IV.B.6.d.ii.d. is not applicable.

Conclusion: Accordingly, the Ethics Panel determines that [REDACTED] **may not attend the Raptor Customer Advisory Board Meeting under the circumstances described.** Participation would constitute acceptance of a prohibited gift under **Board Policy 0107, Section IV.B.6**, and would create an impermissible conflict of interest under the standards of conduct outlined in the policy.



ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

14201 School Lane | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6115
boe.ethicspanel@pgcps.org | www.pgcps.org/offices/board-of-education

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Advisory Opinion 25-02

Sincerely,

v/r Amanda Wallace
Panelist, Ethics Panel