

## **Advisory Opinion 21-04**

This Advisory Opinion 21-04 is in response to an Application filed by an employee who has been invited to attend, and to present at, a conference of eighty K-12 school superintendents and cabinet-level academic and technology officials. The Applicant will be an honorary speaker at the conference and will not be paid for her presentations. There are no travel expense issues, as the conference is virtual. The Applicant will not meet with potential vendors to the school system nor associate with them during the conference. Her virtual attendance will include being one of a three-member opening panel.

A school official may not participate in any matter in which the official has a financial interest, or in which a business entity in which the official has a financial interest is involved. Policy 8363 II. There is no indication of either type of financial interest being involved in this instance. A school official may accept reasonable reimbursement for food, travel, and lodging in return for participation on a panel or a speaking engagement at a meeting. Policy 8362 E. This policy is not implicated, however, in this case, because the event is virtual and there will be no food, travel or lodging expenses. In short, the panel sees no ethical issues that should prevent the Applicant from participating in this conference.

### **CONCLUSION**

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, it is the Opinion of the Ethics Panel that the Applicant's participation in the conference described above and in her supporting documents raised not ethical issues that would prevent her from attending the conference.

This opinion has been adopted by the Ethics Review Panel members on May 6, 2021.

Ralph Sapia, Esq.  
Chair

Tim Topoleski, Ph.D.  
Vice Chair

Cynthia Boyd, M.D., M.P.H.  
Panel Member

Owen Jarvis, Esq.  
Panel Member

Thomas Keech, Esq.  
Panel Member