

# MINNESOTA COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

## Conflict of Interest Policy

### Article I

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the interest of the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies (MCSS) when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of MCSS or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

### Article II

#### **Definitions**

##### 1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with the MCSS's board of directors' delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

##### 2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the MCSS has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the MCSS or with any entity or individual with which the MCSS has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the MCSS is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the MCSS board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.

## Article III

### **Procedures**

#### 1. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with the MCSS board of directors' delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

#### 2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, the person shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

#### 3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the MCSS board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, the person shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The president of the MCSS board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the MCSS board or committee shall determine whether the MCSS can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the MCSS board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interest of MCSS, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

#### 4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

- a. If the MCSS board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis

for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the MCSS board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

#### Article IV

##### **Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the MCSS board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the MCSS board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### Article V

##### **Compensation**

a. A voting member of the MCSS board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the MCSS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

b. A voting member of any MCSS committee whose delegated jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the MCSS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

c. No voting member of the MCSS board or any committee whose delegated jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the MCSS, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

## Article VI

### **Annual Statements**

Each MCSS director, principal officer and member of a committee with MCSS board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy;
- b. Has read and understands the policy;
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy; and
- d. Understands the MCSS is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

## Article VII

### **Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the MCSS operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and are the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the MCSS written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

## Article VIII

### **Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the MCSS may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the MCSS board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

## MCSS Annual Conflict of Interest Statement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, MCSS Member of the Board of Directors,  
affirm that I:

- a. Have received a copy of the conflict of interest policy;
- b. Have read and understand the policy;
- c. Have agreed to comply with the policy; and
- d. Understand the MCSS is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_