



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE CIVIL SERVICE
LOUISIANA BOARD OF ETHICS

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April 24, 2017

Patricia A. Adams
Chief of Legal Services
Jefferson Parish Public School System
501 Manhattan Boulevard, Suite 1200
Harvey, LA 70058

Re: Ethics Board Docket No. 2017-220

Dear Ms. Adams:

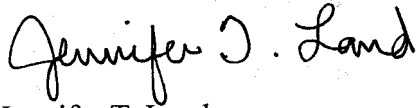
The Louisiana Board of Ethics, at its April 21, 2017 meeting, considered your request for an advisory opinion as to whether Isaac Joseph, Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS), may accept an honorarium and payment of travel, meal, ground transportation and lodging costs in exchange for providing consulting services. You stated that the Educational Research & Development Institute (ERDI) has invited Superintendent Joseph to participate as a consulting educational leader at its bi-annual conferences. You provided information that ERDI's stated mission is "to provide a forum for dialogue between outstanding educational leaders and committed corporate partners to shape products, goods, and services that will inspire excellence in education and enrich the achievement of all learners." ERDI fulfills this mission through annual conferences during which panels of school superintendents discuss topics of interest to ERDI clients and potential clients. You also stated that as a participating consultant, Superintendent Joseph would be expected to attend two conferences per year and ERDI would pay for his lodging, meals, airfare and ground transportation. Finally, you stated that ERDI will pay Superintendent Joseph an honorarium of \$2,000 for each conference, plus an additional \$100 for serving as a panel chairperson. Information was provided that the JPPSS does not pay dues to ERDI and does not have any other type of business or financial relationship with ERDI.

The Board concluded, and instructed me to inform you, that the Code of Governmental Ethics would prohibit Superintendent Joseph from accepting an honorarium and additional compensation from ERDI for providing consulting services. La. R.S. 42:1111C(1)(a) prohibits a public servant from receiving any thing of economic value for any service, the subject matter of which is devoted substantially to the responsibilities, programs, or operations of the agency of the public servant and in which the public servant has participated. La. R.S. 42:1111C(2)(d) prohibits a public employee from receiving compensation for or in consideration of services rendered to or for any person who has or is seeking a business, contractual or financial relationship with his agency. Because Superintendent Joseph would be providing consulting services regarding matters related to his public job duties, he would be prohibited from receiving compensation from ERDI in connection with his participation as a consulting educational leader at its bi-annual conferences. However, because the JPPSS does not have a business, contractual or financial relationship with ERDI, the JPPSS would not be prohibited from accepting an unconditional donation from ERDI that could then be used to pay for Superintendent Joseph's travel, meal, ground transportation and lodging costs associated with his attendance at ERDI's annual conferences.

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as set forth herein. Changes to the facts as presented may result in a different application of the provisions of the Code of Ethics. The Board issues no opinion as to past conduct or as to laws other than the Code of Governmental Ethics. If you have any questions, please contact me at (800) 842-6630 or (225) 219-5600.

Sincerely,

LOUISIANA BOARD OF ETHICS

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer T. Land". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer T. Land
For the Board