Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
200 E. North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

ETHICS PANEL

ADVISORY OPINION OF THE
BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

The Ethics Panel of the Baltimore City Board School Commissioners is issuing this advisory opinion pursuant to Policy BCA Code of Ethics Section III(B)(5), which provides that “[a]ny Board member, student commissioner, official, employee or other person subject to the provisions of this policy may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Panel concerning the application of this policy.”

On September 4, 2019, the Ethics panel received a request for an Advisory Opinion regarding the prior approved attendance at [redacted]. The Panel was asked to consider whether a participation sponsorship could be accepted. As stated in the request, if the sponsorship is not allowable, then City Schools would submit for expense reimbursement from the event sponsors. Below are the Findings and Recommendations from the Ethics Panel meeting of [redacted].

FINDINGS

Per Policy BCA Code of Ethics Sec. III.6.d.ii. “...an official may accept: h) An honorarium for speaking to or participating in a meeting, provided that the offering of the honorarium is in no way related to the City Schools or Board position of the official”. Clearly, [redacted] would not have attended the [redacted] if not for [redacted] position in City Schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, accepting the sponsorship would be in violation of Policy. However, per BCA Sec. III.6.d.ii. “…an official may accept: ...d) Reasonable expenses for food, travel, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of the official at a meeting which is given in return for the participation of the official on a panel or for speaking at a meeting.” Therefore, it is acceptable for City Schools to recoup reasonable and customary expenses related to travel and meals from the event sponsors.

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as presented. The Panel expresses no opinion as to matters that may exist now or in the future that have not been presented. Panel decisions are based on a case-by-case examination of the relevant factual information and applicable regulations.

Date: September 10, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Domanic A. Smith, M.Div.
Chairman, Ethics Panel