

## **THE CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA**

### **State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001, FAC The Code of Ethics of the Education Professional in Florida**

- (1) The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
- (2) The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
- (3) Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

### **State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006, FAC**

- (1) The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.
- (2) Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.
- (3) Obligation to the student requires that the individual
  - (a) Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
  - (b) Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - (c) Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
  - (d) Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program. (e) Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - (f) Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - (g) Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - (h) Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
  - (i) Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- (4) Obligation to the public requires that the individual
  - (a) Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.

- (b) Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
  - (c) Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
  - (d) Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
  - (e) Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
- (5) Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual
- (a) Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
  - (b) Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
  - (c) Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
  - (d) Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct with unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
  - (e) Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
  - (f) Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgment of colleagues.
  - (g) Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
  - (h) Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
  - (i) Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
  - (j) Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
  - (k) Shall provide upon the request of the certificated individual, a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
  - (l) Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct of the educational Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida statutes and State Board of Education rules.
  - (m) Shall self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by district) any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes.

- (n) Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- (o) Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- (p) Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.
- (q) Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

**For further information, call or write Florida Education Standards Commission Ralph Turlington Building, Suite 224 325 West Gaines Street Tallahassee, Florida 32399.**

## **HOW TO USE COMMON SENSE AND PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT TO AVOID LEGAL COMPLICATIONS IN TEACHING**

### **Interaction with Students**

- Maintain a professional barrier between you and students. You are the adult, the teacher, and the professional; act like the expert, not like another one of the “kids.”
- Keep the classroom door open when talking with students.
- Refer students to the appropriate resource person for counseling and/or discussions about personal matters.
- Do NOT flirt with students.
- Do NOT discuss your personal life or personal matters with students. Do NOT discuss your husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, or dates.
- When transporting students, coordinate transportation ahead of time, and use school or mass transportation if possible. If necessary, call a taxi for the student. If you must transport a student in your vehicle, ask a co-worker to accompany you.
- Avoid leaving your students unsupervised; have an alternate plan of action.
- Keep your hands and other parts of your body to yourself. □ Use verbal praise and reinforcement.
- Know your school policies and district and state laws governing corporal punishment. Establish and follow a consistent behavior plan. Treat each student with respect. Know the students’ rights.
- Chaperon only school-sponsored functions. Do NOT socialize with students. If you chaperon a field trip, put in writing what your responsibilities will be. Do NOT drink alcoholic beverages in front of students. Do NOT take students home with you.
- Do NOT make telephone calls or write notes of a personal nature to students.
- Do not harass students; respect their differences. What you intend as humor may, in fact, be cultural bias or harassment.

### **Record Keeping and Accounting Procedures**

- Know the laws, school board policies, and school rules and follow them. Know your rights.
- Know your school policies and district and state laws regarding collecting money, purchasing materials and equipment, and follow them. Work in pairs when collecting large amounts of money.
- Establish a policy regarding your grading system consistent with school and district policies, where applicable. Give a written explanation of it to students and parents at the beginning of the year or when they begin your class or unit of instruction.
- Establish a policy regarding your behavioral management system. Give a written explanation of it to students and parents at the beginning of the year or when they begin your class or unit of instruction.

## **Reputation in the Community**

- Keep your co-workers and supervisors informed; work and communicate as a team; plan and teach each other.
- Communicate with parents and document your communication.
- Dress and act appropriately and professionally. You are a role model in the community as well as in the school. Be a good example for students.
- Use common sense and good judgment. Ask yourself how someone else could perceive your comments or actions. Ask yourself if your comments or actions could be taken out of context and/or misinterpreted.
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where you have to defend, explain, or justify your behavior or actions. Avoid putting yourself in a position where it is your work against another person's word.
- Maintain a professional reputation in the community. When you "party," be discreet.

## **N-E-A-T PROCESS**

- N** Notice to the educator that deficiencies exist that may lead to disciplinary action if not corrected.
- E** Explanation of the deficiencies that the administrator or supervisor responsible for evaluation has identified, should be thorough and detailed in written form, and include suggestions for improvement.
- A** Assistance must be provided to the educator by those responsible for evaluation and supervision of the educator. A practical plan for remediation of each deficiency noted must be developed. When possible, the educator should be included in the development of the plan to improve performance.
- T** Time must be provided for correction of all deficiencies noted. The time allotted must be reasonable and commensurate with the volume of deficiencies listed so that the educator is provided a sincere opportunity to improve sufficiently to meet the expectation of those responsible for evaluation.

### **6B-4.08 SBER explains the N-E-A-T process**

<http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/dpe/publications/coe-training.pdf>