

Executive Summary

Guiding Principles: The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators Principles of Professional Conduct and Investigations

Introduction

The Commissioner's Task Force on a Code of Ethics for Educators focused their work on two related yet separate tasks, the development of a code of ethics for the state's educators and a revision of the state's code of conduct outlined in Ed 500-511.

The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators serves as a set of guidance in navigating challenging circumstances that surface in assuming the role of an educator. Application of this code is broad and applies to all educational personnel across multiple settings, including public and private schools as well as organizations that provide learning opportunities for students. The purpose of this code is a recognition that educators are on the front lines of our schools making thousands of decisions a day with little support and guidance from the profession.

Principles of Professional Conduct and Investigations defines behaviors educators must comply with or risk the loss of a NH educator credential. As such, Principles of Professional Conduct applies to New Hampshire credential holders only and does not have the broad application of the Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics for NH Educators and *The Principles of Professional Conduct* share common threads and complement one another, nonetheless they fulfill very different functions. One of the notable reasons for the two codes is an appreciation of the difference between employment and licensing decisions. The Task Force deemed that BOTH were necessary and should be established in supporting the state's educators and protecting students across schools and educational organizations.

This executive summary highlights specific recommendations of the Task Force that offer substantial change to the field, those highlighted are notable but not representative of all the proposed changes. Further, this document is meant to identify the noteworthy changes and prompt individuals to explore the substance within the proposed codes.

Proposal Highlights

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification's (NASDTEC) *Model Code of Ethics for Educator's* (MCEE, 2015) served as a foundational document. The Commissioner's Task Force took care in making NH's code of ethics digestible, usable, and real. The field will notice distinct differences across this foundational document and NH's code. MCEE should be used as an additional resource http://www.nasdtec.net/?page=MCEE_DOCS.

NH's Code of ethics will appear in administrative rules as a provision under professional responsibility within the professional educator standards for certification and program approval.

The term “student” is defined and applies to both *The Code of Ethics for NH Educators* and *Principles of Professional Conduct and Investigations*. Such definition goes beyond the definition of the age of consent and aims to protect students for a period of time following graduation.

“Inappropriate communication” has been defined establishing clarity in expectations in communicating with students, families, and colleagues.

The terms “revocation” and “suspension” have been defined detailing the difference among two disciplinary actions the state may pursue.

Previously, the Ed 500’s addressed educator conduct through a systematic declaration of misconduct, taking a more negative approach to the content. The revised Ed 510 is now titled *Principles of Professional Conduct*, taking a more positive approach. Further, Ed 510 enumerates specific behaviors of professional conduct. Previous to this revision conduct/misconduct were ambiguous with language stating, “inability to perform assigned duties, loss of respect in the community, and incompetence.”

While revocations and suspensions are public in nature, the NHDOE will now publish the suspension and revocation list making it available for all consumers. Only active suspensions will be listed and publically available.

“Reprimand” has been added as a disciplinary action that may be pursued by the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE).

Those responsible for reporting misconduct has expanded. Individuals in the role of school principal are now identified as a reporting category. Reporting occurs to the Office of Credentialing.

The immediate suspension of an educator’s credential upon an arrest of a suspense as referenced in RSA 189:13-a, V will now occur.

Improved transparency and consistency in the investigatory process has been established within the *Principles of Professional Conduct*. The administrative process has been revamped enhancing the process and providing clarity to the field.