

REPORTING

- (a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the standards in the *Code of Ethics for Educators* as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.).
 - (b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
 4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
 5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
 6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and
 7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- (a) The Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:
 1. unethical conduct as outlined in The *Code of Ethics for Educators*, Standards 1-10 (PSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the *Code of Ethics for Educators*, Standards 1-10 (PSC Rule 505-6-.01);
- (b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the superintendent's designee for certification shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GAPSC certification. Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

For more about the Code of Ethics for Educators, please visit the Georgia Professional Standards Commission at www.gapsc.com.



Professional Association of Georgia Educators

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Providing professional learning for educators that will enhance professional competence and confidence, build leadership and lead to higher student achievement, while providing the best in membership, legislative and legal services and support.



Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract An educator shall fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to,:

1. abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and
2. willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.

Standard 9: Required Reports An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the *Code of Ethics for Educators*, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to,:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the *Code of Ethics for Educators* of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include, but are not limited to, the following: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

Standard 10: Professional Conduct An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline or morals of students.

Standard 11: Testing An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to,:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

Continued

Definitions

Certificate: any teaching, service or leadership certificate, license or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

Educator: a teacher, school or school system administrator or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the *Code of Ethics for Educators*, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides and substitute teachers.

Student: any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on Aug. 31 of the year of graduation.

Complaint: any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the *Code of Ethics for Educators*. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.

Revocation: the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

Denial: the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

Suspension: the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

Reprimand: admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

Warning: warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

Monitoring: the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

No Probable Cause: a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.