Board Policy 5280: Professional Standards Commission (PSC) Code of Ethics

Status: ADOPTED

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The Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators was developed by the Professional Standards Commission, approved by the Idaho State Board of Education, and approved by the Idaho Legislature.

The District's professional educators are required to comply with the most current version of the Code of Ethics provided in IDAPA 08.02.02.076. (see below)

Additionally, the Board requires all classified employees and volunteers of the District to comply with the Code of Ethics to the extent applicable to their work. Violation of the Code of Ethics may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer position with the District. Such disciplinary action may be carried out by the District. In the case of certified employees, any violation of the Code of Ethics may be reported to the Professional Standards Commission.

The District shall report to the Professional Standards Commission:

1. Any resignation by an employee while they are under investigation
2. Any resignation by an employee in lieu of contemplated disciplinary action, termination, or administrative leave that occurs during an investigation of misconduct by school personnel.

For the purposes of this policy, misconduct refers to any conduct by school personnel that violates the provisions of IC 33-1208 relating to educator-student relationships or the Code of Ethics relating to educator-student relationships.

The District may report any other violation of the Code of Ethics to the Professional Standards Commission.

For any complaint the District makes to the Commission that contains information on behavior that may be criminal, the District shall also report the matter to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

The code of ethics is:

Believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, the professional educator recognizes the supreme importance of pursuing truth, striving toward excellence, nurturing democratic citizenship and safeguarding the freedom to learn and to teach while guaranteeing equal educational opportunity for all. The professional educator accepts the responsibility to practice the profession according to the highest ethical principles. The Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators

symbolizes the commitment of all Idaho educators and provides principles by which to judge conduct.

01. **Aspirations and Commitments**.

a. The professional educator aspires to stimulate the spirit of inquiry in students and to provide opportunities in the school setting that will help them acquire viable knowledge, skills, and understanding that will meet their needs now and in the future.

b. The professional educator provides an environment that is safe to the cognitive, physical and psychological well-being of students and provides opportunities for each student to move toward the realization of his goals and potential as an effective citizen.

c. The professional educator, recognizing that students need role models, will act, speak and teach in such a manner as to exemplify nondiscriminatory behavior and encourage respect for other cultures and beliefs.

d. The professional educator is committed to the public good and will help preserve and promote the principles of democracy. He will provide input to the local school board to assist in the board's mission of developing and implementing sound educational policy, while promoting a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged.

e. The professional educator believes the quality of services rendered by the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens. He strives, therefore, to establish and maintain the highest set of professional principles of behavior, to improve educational practice, and to achieve conditions that attract highly qualified persons to the profession.

f. The professional educator regards the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed in a manner consistent with the highest ideals of professional service. He believes that sound professional personal relationships with colleagues, governing boards, and community members are built upon integrity, dignity, and mutual respect. The professional educator encourages the practice of the profession only by qualified persons.

02. **Principle I - Professional Conduct**. A professional educator abides by all federal, state, and local education laws and statutes. Unethical conduct shall include the conviction of any felony or misdemeanor offense set forth in Section 33-1208, Idaho Code.

03. **Principle II - Educator/Student Relationship**. A professional educator maintains a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside the physical and virtual classroom. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Committing any act of child abuse, including physical or emotional abuse;

b. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;

c. Committing or soliciting any sexual act from any minor or any student regardless of age;

d. Committing any act of harassment as defined by local education agency policy;

e. Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating a romantic relationship (whether written, verbal, virtual, or physical) with a student, regardless of age;

f. Soliciting or encouraging any form of personal relationship with a student that a reasonable educator would view as undermining the professional boundaries necessary to sustain an effective educator-student relationship;

g. Using inappropriate language including, but not limited to, swearing and improper sexual comments (e.g., sexual innuendos or sexual idiomatic phrases);

h. Taking or possessing images (digital, photographic, or video) of students of a harassing, confidential, or sexual nature;

i. Inappropriate contact with any minor or any student regardless of age using electronic or social media;

j. Furnishing alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing or encouraging a student to consume alcohol or unauthorized drugs except in a medical emergency;

k. Conduct that is detrimental to the health or welfare of students; and

l. Deliberately falsifying information presented to students.

04. **Principle III - Alcohol and Drugs Use or Possession**. A professional educator refrains from the abuse of alcohol or drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Being on school premises or at any school-sponsored activity, home or away, involving students while possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs;

b. Being on school premises or at any school-sponsored activity, home or away, involving students while possessing, using, or consuming alcohol;

c. Inappropriate or illegal use of prescription medications on school premises or at any school-sponsored events, home or away;

d. Inappropriate or illegal use of drugs or alcohol that impairs the individual's ability to function; and

e. Possession of an illegal drug as defined in Chapter 27, Idaho Code, Uniform Controlled Substances.

05. **Principle IV - Professional Integrity**. A professional educator exemplifies honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Fraudulently altering or preparing materials for licensure or employment;

b. Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting professional qualifications, degrees, academic awards, and related employment history when applying for employment or licensure;

c. Failure to notify the state at the time of application for licensure of past revocations or suspensions of a certificate or license from another state;

d. Failure to notify the state at the time of application for licensure of past criminal convictions of any crime violating the statutes or rules governing teacher certification;

e. Falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or deliberately omitting information regarding the evaluation of students or personnel, including improper administration of any standardized tests

(changing test answers; copying or teaching identified test items; unauthorized reading of the test to students, etc.);

f. Falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or deliberately omitting reasons for absences or leaves;

g. Falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or deliberately omitting information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation;

h. Falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or deliberately omitting material information on an official evaluation of colleagues; and

i. Failure to notify the state of any criminal conviction of a crime violating the statutes and/or rules governing teacher certification.

06. **Principle V - Funds and Property**. A professional educator entrusted with public funds and property honors that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Misuse, or unauthorized use, of public or school-related funds or property;

b. Failure to account for school funds collected from students, parents, patrons, or other donors from all sources, including online donation platforms;

c. Submission of fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay;

d. Co-mingling of public or school-related funds in personal bank account(s);

e. Use of school property for private financial gain;

f. Use of school computers to deliberately view or print pornography; and,

g. Deliberate use of poor budgeting or accounting practices.

07. **Principle VI - Compensation**. A professional educator maintains integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or business personnel when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Unauthorized solicitation of students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator who will directly benefit;

b. Acceptance of gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

c. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education; and,

d. Soliciting, accepting, or receiving a financial benefit greater than fifty dollars ($50) as defined in Section 18-1359(b), Idaho Code.

e. Keeping for oneself donations, whether money or items, that were solicited or accepted for the benefit of a student, class, classroom, or school.

08. **Principle VII - Confidentiality**. A professional educator complies with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and employee records, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, personal confidences, health and medical information, family status or income, and assessment or testing results with inappropriate individuals or entities; and

b. Sharing of confidential information about colleagues obtained through employment practices with inappropriate individuals or entities.

09. **Principle VIII - Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment**. A professional educator fulfills all 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:

a. Abandoning any contract for professional services without the prior written release from the contract by the employing local education agency;

b. Willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract; and,

c. Abandonment of classroom or failure to provide appropriate supervision of students at school or school-sponsored activities to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

10. **Principle IX - Duty to Report**. A professional educator reports breaches of the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators and submits reports as required by Idaho Code. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Failure to comply with Section 33-1208A, Idaho Code, (reporting requirements and immunity);

b. Failure to comply with Section 16-1605, Idaho Code, (reporting of child abuse, abandonment or neglect);

c. Failure to comply with Section 33-512B, Idaho Code, (suicidal tendencies and duty to warn); and

d. Having knowledge of a violation of the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators and failing to report the violation to an appropriate education official.

11. **Principle X - Professionalism**. A professional educator ensures just and equitable treatment for all members of the profession in the exercise of academic freedom, professional rights and responsibilities while following generally recognized professional principles. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. Any conduct that seriously impairs the Certificate holder's ability to teach or perform his professional duties;

b. Committing any act of harassment toward a colleague;

c. Failure to cooperate with the Professional Standards Commission in inquiries, investigations, or hearings;

d. Using institutional privileges for the promotion of political candidates or for political activities, except for local, state or national education association elections;

e. Willfully interfering with the free participation of colleagues in professional associations; and

f. Taking, possessing, or sharing images (digital, photographic, or video) of colleagues of a harassing, confidential, or sexual nature.

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Legal References	Description
IC § 33-1208	Teachers - Revocation, Suspension, Denial, or Place Reasonable Conditions on Certificate — Grounds
IC § 33-1208A	Teachers — Reporting Requirements and Immunity
IC § 33-1209	Teachers - Proceedings to Revoke, Suspend or Deny or Place Reasonable Conditions on a Certificate
IC § 33-5206(6)	Requirements and Prohibitions of a Public Charter School
IC 33-145	Idaho Student Safety and Educator Disclosure Act
IDAPA 08.02.02.076	Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators
IDAPA 08.02.02.077	Definitions for Use with the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators
IDAPA 08.02.04.300	Public Charter School Responsibilities

Other References	Description
ISBA Policy Services	https://www.idsba.org/member-services/policy/

Cross References

Code	Description
4170	District or School Operated Social Media
5275	Adult Sexual Misconduct