

CODE OF ETHICS

A. Preamble

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts his or her responsibility to practice their profession according to the highest ethical standards.

The educator shall recognize the magnitude of responsibility he or she accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this code.

B. Principle I - Commitment as a Professional Educator

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance, and promote equality of opportunity.

In fulfillment of the educator's contractual and professional responsibilities, the educator:

1. Shall not interfere with the exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities of students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members.
2. Shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, age, national origin, ethnic background, or handicapping condition.
3. Shall not use coercive means, or promise or provide special treatment to students, colleagues, school patrons, or school board members in order to influence professional decisions.
4. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact for which the educator is responsible.
5. Shall not exploit professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, or school board members for personal gain or private advantage.
6. Shall not sexually harass students, parents or school patrons, employees, or board members.
7. Shall not have had revoked for cause in another state a teaching certificate, administrative certificate, or any certificate enabling a person to engage in any of the activities for which a special services certificate is issued in Nebraska.
8. Shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.
9. Shall report to the Commissioner any known violation of Principle I, number 7; Principle II, number 5; or Principle IV, number 2.
10. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported a violation of this chapter.

C. Principle II - Commitment to the Student

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interest of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfilling this obligation to the student, the educator:

1. Shall permit the student to pursue reasonable independent scholastic effort, and shall permit the student access to varying points of view.
2. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which the educator is responsible.
3. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with the learning process or are harmful to learning or to health and safety.
4. Shall conduct professional educational activities in accordance with sound educational practices that are in the best interest of the student.
5. Shall keep in confidence information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
6. Shall not tutor during the academic year for remuneration students assigned to his/her classes, unless no other qualified teacher is reasonably available.
7. Shall not discipline students using corporal punishment.

D. Principle III - Commitment to the Public

The magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the educational process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of and confidence in the rule of law, a respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

In fulfilling his/her obligation to the public, the educators:

1. Shall not misrepresent an institution with which the educator is affiliated, and shall take added precautions to distinguish between the educator's personal and institutional views.
2. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates, political issues, or partisan political activities.
3. Shall neither offer nor accept gifts or favors that will impair professional judgment.
4. Shall support the principle of due process and protect the political, citizenship, and natural rights of all individuals.
5. Shall not commit any act of moral turpitude, nor commit any felony under the laws of the United States or any territory.
6. Shall, with reasonable diligence, attend to the duties of his or her professional position.

E. Principle IV - Commitment to the Profession

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfilling their obligations to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall provide upon request of the aggrieved party, a written statement of specific reasons for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or terminations of employment.
2. Shall not misrepresent his or her professional qualifications, nor those of colleagues.
3. Shall practice the profession only with proper certification, and shall actively oppose the practice of the profession by persons known to be unqualified.

F. Principle V - Commitment to Professional Employment Practices

The educator shall regard the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact. The educator shall believe that sound professional personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

1. Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
2. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or employer, or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
3. Shall give prompt notice to the employing agency of any change in availability of service.
4. Shall conduct professional business through designated procedures, when available, that have been approved by the employing agency.
5. Shall not assign to unqualified personnel, tasks for which the educator is responsible.
6. Shall permit no commercial exploitation of his or her professional position.
7. Shall use time on duty and leave time for the purpose for which it is intended.