

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Introduction

It is the responsibility of the Commission to provide advice and counsel to the State Board of Education in developing standards of professional practices in areas including but not limited to (1) ethical and professional performance, (2) competency, (3) continuance in professional service and (4) contractual obligations.

Standards applicable to professional practices have been adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education. The Standards of Competency are presented in this pamphlet. The Commission shall adhere to these standards in making recommendations of whatever nature in accordance with its statutory authority.

The State Board of Education may request the Commission to hold hearings and make recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning alleged violations of standards of professional ethics and practices by holders of public school certificates. Each educator can be aided by this publication in developing and continuing the use of professional practices which are in the best interest of the students, the profession and the public.

STANDARDS OF COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

A. General

The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in Nebraska with respect to competent performance and are therefore declared to be the standards of competency adopted pursuant to the provisions of Section 79-866 R.R.S.

1. The standards set forth herein shall apply to those who hold public school certificates.
2. No finding of professional incompetency shall be made except where a preponderance of evidence exists of such incompetency.

B. Definitions

As used herein the following words and terms have these meanings:

1. Administrator

A holder of a public or nonpublic certificate for administration or supervision issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

2. Admonishment

A private sanction to an educator that further unprofessional or unethical conduct may result in more serious action, including the suspension or revocation of a certificate. This sanction may be imposed by the Commissioner, Commission or Board.

3. Available

That which can be used or obtained.

4. Board

The State Board of Education

5. Communication Skills

The capacity, ability or art of giving, or giving and receiving, through any of the senses, information, ideas and attitudes.

6. Competent

The ability or fitness to discharge the required duties as set forth in this chapter.

7. Designated Task

The duty or assignment for which an educator is responsible at any given time.

8. Diagnosis

Identification of needs, strengths and weaknesses through examination, observation and analysis.

9. Educator

A holder of a public or nonpublic teaching, administrative or special services certificate.

10. Effective

Producing a definite, desired result.

11. Management

Controlling, supervising and guiding the efforts of others.

12. Policy

Authorized written and dated expressions of public intent which have been communicated to the educator and which reflect the general principles guiding the efforts of the school system or school toward approved goals.

13. Preponderance of Evidence

A superiority of weight. Weight is not a question of mathematics, but depends on its effect in

inducing belief.

14. Reasonable

Just; proper. Ordinary or usual. Fit and appropriate to the end in view.

15. Reprimand

A public sanction criticizing or rebuking an educator for unprofessional or unethical conduct. This sanction may be imposed by the Commissioner, Commission or Board.

16. Revocation

A public sanction canceling an educator's certificate for a certain period of time. At the expiration of the revocation period, the former educator may apply for reinstatement in accordance with 92 NAC 28. This sanction may be imposed by the Board.

17. Special Services Provider

A holder of a public or nonpublic special services certificate issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

18. Suspension

A public sanction withdrawing an educator's certificate for a certain period of time. The certificate is automatically reinstated at the expiration of the suspension period if it has not expired during the period of suspension. This sanction may be imposed by the Board.

19. Teacher

A holder of a public or nonpublic certificate issued for teaching pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

C. Administrative and Supervisory Requirement

Educators must possess the abilities and skills necessary to accomplish the designated task. Therefore,

1. Each educator shall:

- (a) keep records for which he or she is responsible in accordance with law and policies of the school system;
- (b) supervise others in accordance with law and policies of the school system; and
- (c) recognize the role and function of community agencies and groups as they relate to the school and to his or her position, including but not limited to health and social services, employment services, community teaching resources, cultural opportunities, educational advisory committees and parent organizations.

2. Each teacher and special services provider shall:

- (a) utilize available instructional materials and equipment necessary to accomplish the designed task;

(b) adhere to and enforce written and dated administrative policy of the school which has been communicated to the teacher or special services provider; and

(c) use channels of communication when interacting with administrators, community agencies, and groups in accordance with school policy.

3. Each administrator shall:

(a) use available instructional personnel, materials and equipment necessary to accomplish the designated task;

(b) adhere to and enforce school law, state board regulation and written and dated school board policy which has been communicated to the administrator; and

(c) use channels of communication when interacting with teachers, community agencies and groups in accordance with school policy.

D. Analysis of Individual Needs and Potential

Each educator shall utilize or promote the utilization of diagnostic techniques to analyze the needs and the potential of individuals. These may include but need not necessarily be limited to:

1. Personal observation;
2. Analysis of individual performance and achievement; and
3. Specific performance testing.

E. Instructional Procedures

Each educator shall seek accomplishment of the designated task through selection and utilization of appropriate instructional procedures. Therefore,

1. Each educator shall:

- (a) create an atmosphere which fosters interest and enthusiasm for learning and teaching;
- (b) use procedures appropriate to accomplish the designated task; and
- (c) encourage expressions of ideas, opinions and feelings.

2. Each teacher shall:

- (a) create interest through the use of materials and techniques appropriate to the varying abilities and backgrounds of students; and
- (b) consider individual student interests and abilities when planning and implementing instruction.

3. Each administrator shall:
- support the creation of interest by providing the materials, equipment and encouragement necessary for the teacher to accomplish the designated task; and
 - make reasonable assignment of tasks and duties in light of individual abilities and specialties and available personnel resources.

F. Communication Skills

In communicating with students and other educators, each educator, within the limits prescribed by his or her assignment and role, shall:

- Utilize information and materials that are relevant to the designated task;
- Use language and terminology which are relevant to the designated task;
- Use language which reflects an understanding of the ability of the individual or group;
- Assure that the designated task is understood;
- Use feedback techniques which are relevant to the designated task;
- Consider the entire context of the statements of others when making judgments about what others have said; and
- Encourage each individual to state his or her ideas clearly.

G. Management Techniques

The educator shall:

- Resolve discipline problems in accordance with law, school board policy and administrative regulations and policies;
- Maintain consistency in the application of policy and practice;
- Use management techniques which are appropriate to the particular setting such as group work, seat work, lecture, discussion, individual projects and others; and
- Develop and maintain positive standards of conduct.

H. Competence in Specialization

Each educator shall:

- Possess knowledge, within his or her area of specialization, consistent with his or her record of professional preparation;
- Be aware of current developments in his or her field; and

- Possess knowledge of resources which may be utilized in improving instruction in his or her area of specialization.

I. Evaluation of Learning and Goal Achievement

An educator shall accept responsibility commensurate with delegated authority to evaluate learning and goals achievement and each educator shall:

- Utilize several types of evaluation techniques;
- Provide frequent and prompt feedback concerning the success of learning and goal achievement efforts;
- Analyze and interpret effectively the results of evaluation for judging instruction, the achievement of state goals or the need for further diagnosis;
- Utilize the results of evaluation for planning, counseling and program modification; and
- Explain methods and procedures of evaluation to those concerned.

J. Human and Interpersonal Relationships

Educators shall possess effective human and interpersonal relations skills and therefore:

- Shall allow others who hold and express differing opinions or ideas to freely express such ideas;
- Shall not knowingly misinterpret the statement of others;
- Shall not show disrespect for or lack of acceptance of others;
- Shall provide leadership and direction for others by appropriate example;
- Shall offer constructive criticism when necessary;
- Shall comply with reasonable requests and orders given by and with proper authority;
- Shall not assign unreasonable tasks; and
- Shall demonstrate self-confidence and self-sufficiency in exercising authority.

K. Personal Requirements

In assessing the mental or physical health of educators, no decision adverse to the educator shall be made except on the advice or testimony of personnel competent to make such judgment by reason or training, licensure and experience. However, certain behaviors are held to be probable cause to examine and each educator within the scope of delegated authority shall:

- Be able to engage in physical activity appropriate to the designated task except for temporary disability;

- Be able to communicate so effectively as to accomplish the designated task;
- Appropriately control his or her emotions; and
- Possess and demonstrate sufficient intellectual ability to perform designated tasks.

Summary

Teaching in the public schools of Nebraska and related administrative and supervisory services are recognized as a profession by the Legislature.

In recognition of the professional status of educators, the Governor is authorized to appoint a Professional Practices Commission representative of elementary and secondary teachers, administrators and higher education. The goal of the Commission is to develop, promote and enforce standards of professionalism for Nebraska educators.

The Commission's Clerk is available to speak to educator or school board groups about the work of the Commission. The Clerk is also available to confer with interested parties relative to problems of professional ethics or competency. For this service, write or call:

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STANDARDS OF COMPETENCY



Nebraska Professional
Practices Commission