

**Wilson Area School District**

**Professional Employees - Code of Conduct**

The State Board of Education adopted a code of professional practice and standards for educators as required by Act 71 of 1989. This policy is written to embrace these standards as formal expectations held for all professional employees.

As provided in 22 Pa. Code 235.1 et. seq., the State Professional Standards and Practices Commission and this Board are committed to providing leadership for improving the quality of education in this Commonwealth by establishing high standards for preparation, certification, practice and ethical conduct in the profession.

The following is a summary of the Code. The above legal citation should be used for the full text.

- A. When individuals become educators in this commonwealth, they make a moral commitment to uphold these community and societal values, accept the responsibility of becoming role models for youth, and of behaving responsibly both in and out of school.
- B. Educators believe that the quality of their service directly influences the nation and its citizens. Educators recognize their obligation to provide services and to conduct themselves in a manner which places the highest esteem on human rights and dignity. Educators seek to ensure that every student receives the highest quality of service and that every educator maintains a high level of competence from entry through ongoing professional development. Educators are responsible for the development of sound educational policy and obligated to implement that policy and its program to the public.
- C. Educators recognize their primary responsibility to the student and the development of the student's potential. Central to that development is the educator's valuing the worth and dignity of every person, student and colleague alike; the pursuit of truth; devotion to excellence; acquisition of knowledge; and democratic principles. To those ends, the educator engages in continuing professional development and keeps current with research and technology. Educators encourage and support the use of resources that best serve the interests and needs of students. Within the context of professional excellence, the educator and student together explore the challenge and the dignity of the human experience.

#### D. Practices

1. Professional practices are behaviors and attitudes that are based on a set of values that the education community believes and accepts. These values are evidenced by the educator's conduct toward students and colleagues, and the educator's employer and community.
2. When candidates become educators, they are expected to abide by the following; the Public School Code of 1949, as amended; provisions of the Public Employee Relations Act, as amended; and, other school laws of the commonwealth.
3. Educators shall be prepared, and legally certified, in their area of assignment. Educators may not be assigned or willingly accept assignments they are not certified to fulfill. Educators may be assigned to or accept assignments outside their area of certification on a temporary, short-term, emergency basis.
4. Educators shall maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers.
5. Educators shall exhibit consistent and equitable treatment of students, fellow educators, and parents. They shall respect the civil rights of all and not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disabling condition or vocational interest. This list of bases is not all-inclusive.
6. Educators shall accept the value of diversity in educational practice. Diversity requires educators to have a range of methodologies and to request the necessary tools for effective teaching and learning.
7. Educators shall impart to their students principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility.
8. Educators shall exhibit acceptable and professional language and communications skills. Their verbal and written communications with parents, students and staff shall reflect sensitivity to the fundamental human rights of dignity, privacy and respect.

9. Educators shall be open-minded, knowledgeable and use appropriate judgment and communications skills when responding to an issue within the education environment.
10. Educators shall keep in confidence information obtained in confidence in the course of professional service unless required to be disclosed by law or by clear and compelling professional necessity as determined by the educator.
11. Educators shall exert reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with learning or are harmful to the student's health and safety.

#### **E. Conduct**

Individual professional conduct reflects upon the practices, values, integrity and reputation of the profession. Violations of this Code of Conduct may constitute an independent basis for private or public reprimand, and may be used as supporting evidence in cases of certification, suspension and revocation.

#### **F. Legal Obligations**

1. The educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by the Teacher Certification Law, as amended.
2. The educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by
  - a. The Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and other laws relating to the schools or the education of children;
  - b. The applicable laws of the commonwealth establishing ethics of public officials and public employees, including the Public Official and Employee Ethics Law. Violations of the above shall have been found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction to be considered an independent basis for discipline.

### **G. Certification**

The educator may not:

1. Accept employment, when not properly certified, in a position for which certification is required.
2. Assist entry into or continuance in the profession of an unqualified person.
3. Employ, or recommend for employment, a person who is not certificated appropriately for the position.

### **H. Civil Rights**

The educator may not:

1. Discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disabling condition or vocational interest against a student or fellow educator. This list of bases is not all-inclusive. This discrimination, if found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction, shall be considered an independent basis for discipline.
2. Interfere with a student's or colleague's exercise of political and civil rights and responsibilities.

### **I. Improper Personal or Financial Gain**

The educator may not:

1. Accept gratuities, gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment.
2. Exploit a professional relationship for personal gain or advantage.

### **J. Relationships with Students**

The educator may not:

1. Knowingly or intentionally distort or misrepresent evaluations of students.

2. Knowingly and intentionally misrepresent subject matter or curriculum.
3. Sexually harass or engage in sexual relationships with students.
4. Knowingly and intentionally withhold evidence from the proper authorities about violations of the legal obligations as defined herein.

**K. Professional Relationships**

The educator may not:

1. Knowingly and intentionally deny or impede a colleague in the exercise or enjoyment of a professional right or privilege in being an educator.
2. Knowingly and intentionally distort evaluations of colleagues.
3. Sexually harass a fellow employee
4. Use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional decisions of colleagues.
5. Threaten, coerce or discriminate against any colleague who in good faith reports or discloses to a governing agency actual or suspected violations of law, agency regulations or standards.