

Teacher Ethics Webinars

PMEA Professional Development Workshops
Presented by Paul K. Fox and Thomas W. Bailey

Part I "The Basics" - *PA Code of Conduct* – January 12, 2021

Part II "Going Beyond" – *Codes of Ethics* – February 9, 2021

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I. Code of Professional Practices and Conduct (CPPC)

Section 1: Mission

Section 2: Introduction

Section 3: Purpose

Section 4: Practices

Section 5: Conduct

Section 6: Legal obligations



Section 7: Certification

Section 8: Civil Rights

Section 9: Improper personal or financial gain

Section 10: Relationships with students

Section 11: Professional relationships

Website: <https://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Statutes-Regulations-Policies-Forms/Code-of-Professional-Practice-Conduct/Pages/default.aspx>

File for printing: <https://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Documents/Statutes%20Regs%20Forms/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

II. Case Study – Interactive Activity – Breakout Rooms

We will now practice making ethical decisions by reading a "fact scenario," forming a learning network with fellow educators, and responding to four discussion questions.

This webinar is modeling the fact scenario and discussion questions first written and released by the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program.

Instructions to the breakout groups:

1. Summarize the responses of the members of your group to each question. Your responses need not all agree.
2. Please take 10 minutes to prepare a reply with your fellow educators.
3. On the return of the full group, we will call for volunteers to summarize their discussion.
4. CSDE TEAM comments:
 - "These brief scenarios provide educators the opportunity to engage in collegial discussions about situations that could result in career threatening consequences."
 - "Although the descriptions provided are fictional, they are based on actual situations and cases that have led to negative consequences ranging from personal and public embarrassment to license revocation, termination, criminal and civil liability."

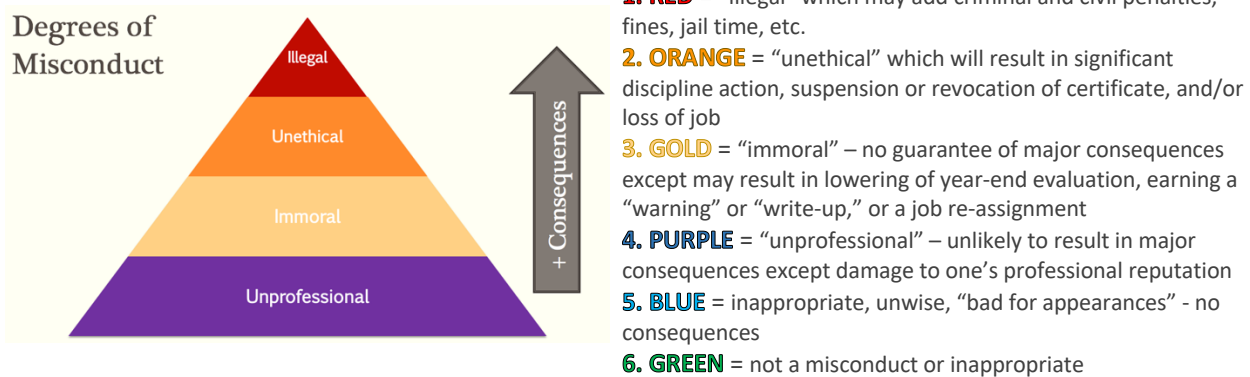
Neighbors Case Study:

Ms. D, a 7th grade math teacher, in her 3rd year of teaching, complains to her next-door neighbor at home about a difficult student in her class. She identifies the child by name and provides specific details about the student's academic record. Ms. D says that the neighbor doesn't know the student personally, so there should be no problem discussing the student and the situation.

Discussion questions (led by Thomas Bailey):

1. What possible issues/concerns might this scenario raise?
2. How could this situation become a violation of school entity policy, the PA Code of Practices or other PA law?
3. In this situation, what are some potential negative consequences for the educator's students, fellow educators and the school community at large?
4. What responses/actions will result in a more positive outcome and/or what proactive measures might be considered?

Follow-up analysis (led by Paul Fox): **What level of educator misconduct does the scenario reach?**



III. Additional Scenarios for Future Discussion

1. Mr. S is a high school music teacher who has been tutoring Melissa on AP Music Theory after school for several months. Although Melissa’s academic performance has been improving, Melissa’s parents meet with the principal about concerns they have regarding Mr. S’s relationship with Melissa. During their tutoring sessions, Mr. S has given Melissa gift cards as rewards for her academic progress, driven Melissa home after tutoring sessions, and even begun to communicate with Melissa via text messaging during the evenings. While they have no proof of any impropriety, Melissa’s parents are concerned. When the principal meets with the teacher, Mr. S argues that his behavior is not inappropriate and that he is simply offering assistance to a student in need.
2. During lunch, Steven R. often walks around the faculty room giving his female colleagues back massages to help them “relax.” Some of the teachers look visibly uncomfortable with the contact and attempt to avoid his massages.
3. Robert M. was a middle school general music teacher who uses the Internet for instruction when students begin working on their composition projects. Due to the small number of computers in his classroom, Mr. M. allowed one of the students to use his desk computer to complete her work. While using Mr. M’s computer, the student encountered several sexually explicit websites that Mr. M. had bookmarked in his Favorites.
4. Melissa S. is a third-grade general music teacher in a rural school. Near the end of the year, Rodrigo enrolls in her class, even though he cannot speak English. Ms. S. is frustrated because she feels she does not have the training to work with a student like Rodrigo and complains in class that “people shouldn’t come here if they can’t even speak our language.” One of the students complains to her parents about what Ms. S said.
5. In the hallway one day, students from one of your classes stop and ask you what you think of Mr. T. When you ask why this would be important to them, they explain that Mr. T. had gone on a tirade in their class and complained about your ability as a teacher. One of them says that Mr. T. says that you were the worst teacher in the school.
6. An itinerant instrumental music instructor travels from school to school. After leaving Elm elementary school, the teacher travels to Central elementary. A Central teacher has a biological child who attends Elm elementary. Because of recent discipline issues with some of the special education students, the teacher at Central begins to ask the itinerant instructor about the behavior of some of the children at Elm elementary. The itinerant begins to share some of the concerns and specifics about the IEPs of those children who were involved in a recent behavioral incident.
7. Elizabeth L. taught general music at Webster Hills Middle School. In her free time, Ms. L. was also a cheerleader for a local sports team. As a reward for their performance on a recent exam, Ms. L. performed one of her cheerleading routines for her eighth graders in her classroom. Unbeknownst to Ms. L, one of the students in the class used his cell phone to videotape the cheerleading routine. The student posted the video online and the video drew the attention of district personnel and community members. Several parents were outraged and complained about the suggestive nature of the cheerleading routine.

IV. Links for Additional Follow-Up – Various Topics on Ethics in Education

- o Blogsites of PMEA presenters Paul Fox <https://paulfox.blog/category/ethics/> and Tom Bailey <https://twbaileylaw.com/>
- o CT Teacher Education & Mentoring Program <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/TEAM/Teacher-Education-And-Mentoring-TEAM-Program>
- o *Crossing Boundaries: Inappropriate Relationships* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwQyoXy0kns> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL02yPaO81qEd7LWjd1yPw0PPHVBMvyPx&v=kgl2OZdzO6Q>
- o *Educator Ethics & Conduct Toolkit* by Oliver Dreon, Sandi Sheppeard, PA State System of Higher Education, Professional Standards & Practices Commission: <http://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Promoting-Ethical-Practices-Resources/Ethics-Toolkit/Pages/default.aspx>
- o *The Good Teacher: A Story of Sexual Misconduct* www.leadershipcredit.info/docBase/The%20Good%20Teacher%20Storyboard5.pptx
- o Iowa Board of Educational Examiners http://www.sai-iowa.org/Educator_Ethics_ppt_NEW_2017.pptx and *Ethics Facilitator’s Guide* <http://www.sai-iowa.org/Educator%20Ethics%20Facilitator%20Handbook%202017.pdf>
- o Lien, Joelle L. (2012). *Ethical Dilemmas of In-Service Music Educators. Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Online: http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Lien11_1.pdf
- o *Model Code of Ethics for Educators* http://www.nasdtec.net/?page=MCEE_Doc
- o NASDTEC *An Introduction to Free and Currently Available Resources* https://www.nasdtec.net/resource/collection/7C8FAAA3-65CF-4B6E-B0B4-801DDA91A35F/Free_and_Available_Resources_rev_Oct_2019_.pdf
- o Nebraska Professional Practices Commission: <https://nppc.nebraska.gov/>
- o *Teachers’ Ethical Dilemmas – What Would You Do?* https://www.redorbit.com/news/education/1141680/teachers_ethical_dilemmas_what_would_you_do/