

Larry Nidiffer
Suspension – 3 months

The Background:

Facts: On May 19, 2016, the Director of Schools of Campbell County, Larry Nidiffer, placed a licensed educator, Daniel Turner (“Mr. Turner”), on administrative suspension for sexually harassing co-workers and for inappropriate physical contact with students (letting students massage his back and shoulders after directives not to; it was investigated by DCS). Mr. Turner was terminated on July 25, 2016. Mr. Turner appealed said decision. The appeal hearings regarding the termination were held in September and November 2016 and April 2017. The hearing officer upheld the termination, and the Campbell County Board of Education upheld said termination of Mr. Turner at its June 13, 2017, Board meeting. No report was ever filed regarding the suspension or termination. On October 31, 2018, Board counsel was contacted by the Pigeon Forge Police Department regarding an investigation into Mr. Turner in Sevier County. The Pigeon Forge Police Department informed Board counsel that it had learned of Mr. Turner having similar issues related to students while he was employed in Campbell County. Board counsel spoke with the Campbell County attorney on November 8, 2018, and was informed that Mr. Turner was terminated for the sexual harassment of co-workers alone, i.e. no issues involving students. Board counsel asked for documentation to that effect, and it was received on November 19, 2018. After review of the documentation received from Campbell County attorney, on January 24, 2019, Board counsel determined that Mr. Turner should have been reported by the Campbell County Director of Schools, Larry Nidiffer, in May 2016 when Mr. Turner was initially suspended and/or when Mr. Turner was terminated in June 2017. The suspension and termination were both based upon misconduct, which if substantiated, would have warranted licensure action under the Board rule.

Status: Respondent was notified by certified mail of the Board’s intent to suspend his educator license based upon these findings. Respondent received said notice.

The Recommendation:

Respondent’s conduct constitutes grounds for license suspension pursuant to Board Rule 0520-02-03-.09(3)(g) and (3)(h).

The Board staff recommends that the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent for the suspension of his license.

THIS ITEM WAS VOTED ON TO BE REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA AND SENT BACK TO THE STAFF FOR MORE DELIBERATION