

Rowdy Jones
Voluntary Surrender

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Mr. Jones, a high school teacher, was reported by Greene County Schools for inappropriate communication as defined under Board rule. An investigation revealed that Mr. Jones sent Snapchat messages to a student, which included expletives and what appears to be an attempt to have a physical relationship with the student. Mr. Jones resigned from his position with Greene County Schools.

Applicable Rule: 0520-02-03-.09(1)(k) defines Other Good Cause as conduct that calls into question the fitness of an educator to hold a license including, but not limited to, noncompliance with security guidelines for Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) or successor tests pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-607, failure to report licensure actions as required under paragraph (2), or violation of any provision in the Teacher Code of Ethics as contained in T.C.A. §§ 49- 5-1001, et seq.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(l) defines Permanent Revocation as the nullification of an educator's license without eligibility for future restoration.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(c) defines inappropriate communication (explicit) as any communication between an educator and a student that describes, represents, or alludes to sexual activity or any other illicit activity. This shall not be construed to prevent an educator from communication regarding sexual or illicit activities for educational purposes such as in teaching family-life curriculum pursuant to T.C.A 49-6-1307 et seq. or drug abuse resistance education pursuant to T.C.A 49-1-402.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(d) defines inappropriate communication (non-explicit) as any communication between an educator and a student that is beyond the scope of the educator's professional responsibilities. Examples of such non-explicit inappropriate communications include, but are not limited to, those communications that discuss the teaching staff member's or student's past or current romantic relationships; those that include the use of profanities or obscene language; those that are harassing, intimidating, or bullying; those that attempt to establish an inappropriate personal relationship with a student; and those that are related to personal or confidential information regarding another school staff member or student.

0520-02-03-.09(3)(g) provides that the Board may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for Other good cause as defined in subparagraph (1)(k) of this rule;

0520-02-03-.09(3)(h) provides that the Board may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for any offense contained in paragraph (5) of this rule.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(5)(i) provides that an individual holding an educator's license who is found to have engaged in non-explicit inappropriate communication with a student shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a suspension for no less than three (3) months up to and including revocation.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(5)(ii) provides that an individual holding an educator's license who is found to have engaged in inappropriate communication of an explicit nature with a student shall be subject to permanent revocation.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(8) provides that an individual holding an educator's license who is found to have violated the teacher code of ethics shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a suspension for no less than one (1) year up to and including revocation.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(14) provides that an educator shall ensure interactions with the student take place in transparent and appropriate settings;

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(15) provides that an educator shall not engage in any sexually related behavior with the student, whether verbal, written, physical, or electronic, with or without the student's consent. Sexually related behavior includes, but is not limited to, behaviors such as making sexual jokes or sexual remarks; engaging in sexual kidding, sexual teasing, or sexual innuendo; pressuring the student for dates or sexual favors;

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(19) provides that an educator shall maintain a professional approach with the student at all times.

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

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

July 2019 – Board approved the voluntary surrender of an educator's license for having sexual communication with a student. (permanent)

July 2019 – Board approved the voluntary surrender of an educator's license for making sexual comments to a student.

The Recommendation:

The Board staff recommends that the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent based upon the facts and applicable rule noted above.