

Alicia Danielle Sharp
Suspension, 2 Years with Professional Development

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Ms. Sharp was reported by Knox County Schools for sending inappropriate videos and messages via SnapChat to at least one student. Over the course of one evening, Ms. Sharp sent at least five (5) SnapChat video messages. In the videos Ms. Sharp asks if the individual receiving the video message is sober and mentions the individual being underage. Ms. Sharp also makes a sexual innuendo and a provocative gesture with her mouth.

Ms. Sharp resigned her position with Knox County Schools.

Applicable Law

/Rule: T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(15) provides that in fulfillment of this obligation to the student, 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; engaging in inappropriate physical touching, groping, or grabbing; kissing; rape; threatening physical harm; and committing sexual assault.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(15) provides that in fulfillment of this obligation to the student, an educator shall strive to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by the student when the student is under the educator's supervision on school or LEA premises, during school activities, or in any private setting.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(19) provides that in fulfillment of this obligation to the student, an educator shall maintain a professional approach with the student at all times.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1004(c)(2) provides that educators shall conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(d) defines Inappropriate Communication (Explicit) as any communication between an educator and a student that describes, represents, or alludes to sexual activity or any other illegal activity.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(e) 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 educator'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(1)(h) defines Negligence as a failure to exercise the care toward others that a reasonable or prudent person would exercise under the circumstances or taking action that a reasonable person would not. Examples of such negligence include, but are not limited to, situations that expose students to mental or physical harm or the potential for mental or physical harm such as leaving dangerous items in the classroom or in areas easily accessible to students and leaving students unattended.

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, 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(3)(i) provides that the State Board of Education 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)(j) provides that the State Board of Education may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for any offense contained in paragraphs (4) and/or (5) of this rule.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(3)(i) An individual holding an educator's license who is found to be negligent in his or her commission of duties as an educator in such a manner that does not result in harm to a child, but presented the potential for physical or mental harm, shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a letter of formal reprimand up to and including a two (2) year suspension

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(5)(i) provides that the State Board of Education may impose disciplinary action 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 the State Board of Education may impose disciplinary action 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 contained in T.C.A. Title 49, Chapter 5,

Part 10 shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a formal reprimand up to and including revocation.

Status: Respondent was notified by certified mail of the Board's intent to suspend her educator license based upon these findings and require the completion of a professional development course in National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) "Prevention and Correction: Overview Course." Respondent received said notice. Respondent agreed to the **two (2) year suspension** of her license and required professional development.

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

February 2022 – The Board approved the suspension of an educator's license for a period of two (2) years with required professional development due to the educator's inappropriate communication with students involving references of a sexually related nature.

May 2021 – The Board approved the suspension of an educator's license for a period of two (2) years with required professional development due to the educator's inappropriate communication with students involving references of a sexually related nature.

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 for the suspension of her educator's license for two (2) years with completion of professional development.