

Lori Coker
Suspension, Six (6) Months with Professional Development

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Ms. Coker aggressively grabbed a student by the arm, lifting him off the ground and transporting him several feet.

Applicable Rule

/Law: 0520-02-03-.09(1)(f) defines Inappropriate Physical Contact as Unlawful and/or unjustified physical contact with a student. Examples of such inappropriate physical contact include, but are not limited to, sexual contact, physical altercations, horseplay, tickling, improper use of corporal punishment, and rough housing.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(k) defines 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(1)(p) defines Suspension as the nullification of an educator's license for a predetermined term, after which the license may be reinstated. Reinstatement may be subject to the completion of terms and conditions contained in the order of suspension.

0520-02-03-.09(3)(e) provides the State Board of Education may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for inappropriate physical contact with a student.

0520-02-03-.09(3)(i) provides 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(5)(a)(6)(i) An individual holding an educator's license who is found to have engaged in inappropriate physical contact with a student shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a formal reprimand up to and including suspension for two (2) years.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(8) provides 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.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(7) provides that an educator shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(8) provides that an educator shall make reasonable effort to protect the emotional well-being of the student.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(9) provides that an educator shall not intentionally expose students to embarrassment or disparagement.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(19) provides educators shall maintain a professional approach with students at all times

Status: Respondent was notified by certified mail of the Board's intent to **suspend** her educator license based upon these findings. Respondent received said notice and consented to the suspension.

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

November 2019 – Board approved the three (3) month suspension of an educator's license after the educator slapped an unruly student on the shoulder to redirect behavior.

February 2021 – Board approved six (6) month retroactive suspension of an educator's license after the educator pulled a student by the feet, ankles, and/or legs.

July 2022 – Board approved the three (3) month suspension of an educator's license after the educator jerked a student by the arm.

The Recommendation:

Board counsel recommends the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by Respondent for a six (6) month suspension of Respondent's license with professional development based upon the facts and applicable rule noted above.