

Sarah Woerner
Suspension, Two (2) Years with Proof of Treatment

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: On or about September 21, 2022, Ms. Woerner was pulled over by police as she was leaving a high school campus where she was coaching a volleyball game. She was subsequently arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol. On June 14, 2023, Ms. Woerner pled guilty to driving under the influence of alcohol as a result of her arrest on September 21, 2022.

Applicable Law

/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, 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)(c) provides the State Board of Education may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator’s license for being on school premises, school property, at a school-related activity involving students, or on official school business, while possessing, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

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)(2)(i) provides an individual holding an educator’s license who is found to be in possession of, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol, or illegal substances while on school premises or property when children are present shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of suspension for not less than one (1) year up to and including 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 disciplinary action within the range of a formal reprimand up to and including revocation.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1004(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. § 49-5-1004(b)(18) provides that an educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol while on school or LEA premises or during a school activity at which students are present.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1004(b)(19) provides that an educator shall maintain a professional approach with the student at all times.

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

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

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

February 2022 – Board approved the 2-year suspension, with proof of treatment, of an educator's license after the educator faced allegations of being under the influence of intoxicants while on school premises.

October 2021 – Board approved the 2-year suspension, with proof of treatment, of an educator's license after the educator faced allegations of being under the influence of intoxicants while on school premises.

July 2021 – Board approved the 2-year suspension, with proof of treatment, of an educator's license after the educator faced allegations of being under the influence of intoxicants while on school premises.

The Recommendation:

Board counsel recommends the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent for a two (2) year suspension of Respondent's license with proof of treatment based upon the facts and applicable rules noted above.