

Lauren Smarsh
Suspension, Two (2) Years

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Ms. Smarsh admitted to purchasing and providing alcohol for a student. Ms. Smarsh resigned from her position, and no criminal charges were pursued.

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)(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)(9)(i) 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 educators 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)(16) provides that educators shall, "Not furnish alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs to the student."

T.C.A § 49-5-1003(b)(19) provides that educators shall, "Maintain a professional approach with the student at all times."

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

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

August 2011 – Board approved the suspension of an educator's license for one (1) year concurrent with her criminal probation for contributing to the delinquency of a minor for providing alcohol to a 16-year-old former student who was at her residence.

August 2011 – Board approved the suspension of an educator’s license for one (1) year concurrent with her criminal probation for contributing to the delinquency of a minor after she was found with a student after curfew.

October 2014 – Board approved the revocation of an educator’s license for providing alcohol and marijuana to students at his residence.

November 2020 – Board approved the revocation of an educator's license for providing alcohol to students on a field trip and allowing students to stay in his hotel room.

February 2021 – Board approved the suspension of an educator’s license for two (2) years after she was placed on criminal probation for marijuana possession and contributing to the delinquency of a minor by taking the runaway 17-year-old student to her home.

The Recommendation:

Board counsel recommends the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent for the suspension of Respondent’s license based upon the facts and applicable rule noted above.