Michigan Professional Educator’s Code of Ethics

It is stated in the Revised School Code Act 451 of 1976 that a teaching certificate is valid only if the following oath or affirmation: is signed, notarized, and a copy filed with the superintendent of schools of the school district in which the teacher expects to teach.

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States of America and the constitution of the state of Michigan and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of teacher according to the best of my ability.”

This oath has stood alone as the only descriptor of the teacher’s responsibility to the citizens of Michigan. The office of teacher has many assumptions attached to it and in the most recent federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, additional articulation of being highly qualified is now stated for teachers, yet the members of the Professional Standards Commission for Teachers (PSCT) felt there was a void in relationship to stated expectations for the office of teacher.

Therefore, after searching for a set of statements that are descriptive of the ethics that the office of teacher embraces, and finding this void the members of the PSCT propose the use of the Code of Ethics for Michigan Educators.

PSCT members began this work with the belief that society has charged public education with trust and responsibility that requires of professional educators the highest ideals and quality service. The development and review process of the Code of Ethics for Michigan Educators began in 2002. The statements in the Code of Ethics are aligned with elements from Michigan’s Democratic Core Values.

After researching the use of a code of ethics in other similar professions, a draft of the Code of Ethics for Michigan Educators was distributed to educational organizations, schools, and other interested parties for informal feedback. The Code of Ethics was also presented at information sessions conducted at eight regional sites across the state in the spring of 2003. An electronic version of the Michigan Professional Educator’s Code of Ethics is available on the Michigan Department of Education’s website at the Office of Professional Preparation Services Professional Development web page. The PSCT members encouraged responses from the Michigan Education Association and Michigan Federation of Teachers and Support Personnel members. Revisions were completed based on the feedback received. The results from this review were overwhelmingly positive. The Professional Standards Commission for Teachers approved the Michigan Professional Educator’s Code of Ethics at the November 6, 2003, meeting. The State Board of Education members approved the Michigan Professional Educator’s Code of Ethics at the December 2003 Board of Education meeting.
The Code of Ethics may be used to promote excellence in Michigan teachers using the suggestions that follow. The code:

1. highlights for all adults involved in Pre K-16 educational arenas an agreed upon set of ethical principles to guide decisions.
2. provides a consistent framework for thinking about the societal benefits of quality teachers.
3. raises professional educators’ awareness of the responsibility they carry when accepting a teaching certificate and/or position which involves touching the lives of students in Michigan’s educational systems.
4. makes a professional educator’s ethical commitment transparent to the general public.
5. facilitates awareness and discussion for both pre-service and in-service educators on ethical standards.

These ethical standards address the professional educator’s commitment to the student and the profession. This Code has a natural connection with the teacher’s oath that appears on the back of the Michigan teaching certificates. The Code of Ethics was approved by the State Board of Education as a position statement of the ethical practice of Michigan’s professional educators. This Code of Ethics is one example of addressing the State Board of Education’s goal of Ensuring Excellent Educators for Michigan’s children.

Kansas

Code of Ethics

**NEA Code of Ethics Adopted by the NEA Representative Assembly**

- Commitment to the Student
- Commitment to the Profession

**PRINCIPLE I**

Commitment to the Student

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of
knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly:
   o Exclude any student from participation in any program.
   o Deny benefits to any student.
   o Grant any advantage to any student.
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

**PRINCIPLE II**

**Commitment to the Profession**

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons. In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualification.
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not assist a non educator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

California

Code of Ethics

Preamble

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than one specifically designed by the NEA or its affiliates.

Principle I

Commitment to the Student

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator -

- Shall not reasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
- Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view.
- Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
• Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
• Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
• Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religion beliefs, family, social, or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly:
  a. Exclude any student from participation in any program
  b. Deny benefits to any student
  c. Grant any advantage to any student.

• Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
• Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

**Principle II**

**Commitment to the Profession**

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgement, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation of the profession, the educator -

• Shall not in any application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
• Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
• Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
• Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
• Shall not assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
• Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
• Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
• Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

- Adopted by the NEA

1975 Representative Assembly