



Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program

TEAM

Supplemental Scenarios
Ethical and Professional Dilemmas

Participant's Workbook
Module 5

Understanding the Code of
Professional Responsibility for
Educators



Revised January 2015

Situations Involving Students

Scenario: *Providing Personal/Financial Support*

High School Scenario:

Ms. J is a veteran teacher who has always shown an interest in her students, not just in their academics, but in knowing them as people beyond the classroom. She is aware of and shows an interest in their families, hobbies, sports activities, ambitions and interests. Kevin is a student in her 12th grade social studies class. Ms. J learned that Kevin was interested in attending college, but lacked the necessary financial support from his family. Ms. J felt that through the support of a concerned adult, Kevin could pursue his dream of attending college. She began emailing Kevin with information about the college application and financial aid process. Communications soon became more personal regarding his family life, finances and Kevin's social life. Ms. J offered to pay for Kevin's college applications and as the year progressed helped him to prepare for college by purchasing things that he would need for his dorm room. Ultimately, Ms. J went as far as to help Kevin buy a car and place him on her insurance policy. Although not knowing the extent of her involvement, colleagues began to note her attentiveness to Kevin as inappropriate.

Elementary School Scenario:

Mr. T is a third grade teacher in an urban school. Mr. T has noticed that a little girl named, Molly, has come to school in clothes too thin for winter wear and without an appropriate winter jacket. He has been in touch with Molly's mother and knows that the family is struggling financially. While shopping in a local store, he sees children's winter jackets, gloves and hats for sale and decides to buy what he can for Molly. Molly's mother is very thankful for Mr. T's thoughtfulness and donation. This is not the first time Mr. T has done this. There have been other times in the past that he has bought clothing and discreetly donated it for one of his students.

Consider the following sections of the **Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers**
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-145d-400a

(b) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE STUDENT:

(1) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or obligation to the student, shall:

(I) Remain steadfast in guaranteeing equal opportunity for quality education for all children, and not unlawfully discriminate

c) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION:

(1) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or obligation to the teaching profession, shall:

(A) Conduct himself or herself as a professional realizing that his or her actions reflect directly upon the status and substance of the profession

UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

(2) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession of teaching, shall not:

(C) Engage in any misconduct which would impair his or her ability to teach

Situations Involving Professional Ethics

Scenario: TEAM Program Completion

Ms. B is a third year teacher who is required to complete the requirements of Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program in order to be eligible for continued certification. As part of the program, Ms. B is assigned to a mentor to work with her through the five module professional growth process. However, Ms. B has frequently canceled scheduled time to meet with her mentor and has been inattentive to her expected completion date displayed on her TEAM online dashboard. During her third year of teaching Ms. B was sent a letter from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) providing notification of her impending deadline and its impact on continued certification. Although this letter was sent months in advance, Ms. B chose to ignore it until a month prior to her final deadline date. At that point, Ms. B created four Professional Growth Action Plans (PGAPs) within several days that were approved by the building principal. Four reflection papers were submitted for review within a three week timeframe.

Consider the following sections of the **Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers**
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-145d-400a

(C) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION:

(1) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession of teaching, shall:

- (A) Conduct himself or herself as a professional realizing that his or her action reflects directly upon the status and substance of the profession.
- (D) Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment.
- (E) Assume responsibility for his or her professional development.

UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(2) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession of teaching, shall not:

- (A) Obtain licensure or employment by misrepresentation or fraud

Situations Involving Bullying

Scenario: Promoting a Safe, Productive Learning Environment

By mid-year, Andrew no longer wanted to go to school. He frequently complained to his mother that the teacher was “mean,” but Andrew’s mother thought her son meant that the teacher placed higher expectations on her students than they had been used to in the past. Getting ready for school in the morning, Andrew complained of stomach aches. He didn’t want to go to school. When Andrew’s mother met with his teacher, Ms. H, to discuss her concerns, Ms. H said that Andrew was inattentive and often refused to do the work assigned. She did not address Andrew’s mother’s primary concerns. Andrew began to share more details with his mother about Ms. H. “She picks on me and always seems mad. Yesterday she said to the class, ‘If you want to fail this quiz, just do what Andrew does. Nothing.’ I was so embarrassed! I try to pay attention, but I’d rather put my head down than look at her angry face.” Andrew shared that his teacher would frequently try to get his attention by slamming her hand on his desk, often startling him. Andrew’s mother requested a meeting with the principal immediately. A paraprofessional who works in the classroom has questioned Ms. H about the way she treats Andrew several times without satisfaction. The paraprofessional is going to the principal with her concerns.

Consider the following sections of the **Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers**
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-145d-400a

(b) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE STUDENT:

(1) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or obligation to the student, shall:

- (A) Recognize, respect and uphold the dignity and worth of students as individual human beings, and, therefore, deal justly and considerately with students.
- (G) Promote the right and freedom of students to learn, explore ideas, develop learning skills and acquire the necessary knowledge to achieve their full potential.

c) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION:

(1) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or obligation to the profession of teaching, shall:

- (A) Conduct himself or herself as a professional realizing that his or her actions reflect directly upon the status and substance of the profession
- (D) Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment.

UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

(2) The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the student shall not:

- (C) Emotionally abuse students: or
- (D) Engage in any misconduct which would put students at risk.

Situations Involving Professionalism

Scenario: Professional Attire

High School Scenario:

Mr. B is an 11th grade science teacher who works in a suburban high school. Mr. B is considered to be a valued member of the science department and is well respected by his colleagues and students. Most days Mr. B arrives for work professionally dressed with dress shoes, slacks or khakis, a button-down collared shirt (tucked in) and, on most occasions, a tie. In an effort to raise funds to support extra-curricular clubs, the building principal implemented a Dress Down Friday policy where teachers could elect to pay a nominal fee to wear jeans. Throughout the fall and winter months, teachers abided by the Friday dress down policy, incorporating jeans into their dress down attire. As warmer weather arrived, Mr. B noticed that colleagues were beginning to become more casual in their dress down attire. On one particular warm spring day, Mr. B arrived to work on Dress Down Friday wearing cargo shorts, flip-flops and a graphic t-shirt which exposed several tattoos, including one with explicit language. When addressed by his administrator, Mr. B responded that he felt his attire was no less casual than his other colleagues.

Middle School Scenario:

Ms. S recently graduated from college and began her first teaching job working in a small district. A young 8th Grade teacher, Ms. S strived to exemplify a dedicated professional. She arrived early to prepare her classroom, typically stayed beyond the school day and volunteered to supervise a variety of afterschool and community outreach activities. As colleagues interacted with Ms. S and watched her engage with her students, she quickly built a reputation as a dedicated and competent professional. Though Ms. S was cognizant of appropriate professional attire, she closely followed contemporary fashion trends. Ms. S would often wear V-neck tops complimented with a cardigan sweater, though often times she would remove the cardigan while working with her students. As the fall season approached Ms. S began wearing leggings. On several occasions grade-level team members commented to Ms. S that her attire was sometimes revealing “too much on the top” or “too much on the bottom.” Ms. S simply responded to her team members that her outfit was fashionable and fit within the guidelines of the districts’ dress code policy.

Consider the following sections of the *Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers*: Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-145d-400a

(C) RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION

(1) *The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession of teaching, shall:*

(A) Conduct himself or herself as a professional realizing that his or her actions reflects directly upon the status and substance of the profession;

(D) Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment;

(2) *The professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession of teaching, shall not:*

(C) Engage in any misconduct which would impair his or her ability to teach

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