Enclosure #8

RI Board of Regents

DATE: December 3, 2009

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATOR CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

PREAMBLE

The Rhode Island Code of Professional Responsibility is a set of commitments which the Rhode Island educational community expects all members to honor and practice. These commitments guide professional conduct in all situations with professional and ethical implications. The Code embraces the fundamental belief that the student is the foremost reason for the existence of the profession.

Working with students in Rhode Island schools necessitates a public trust and a level of responsibility to our citizens that requires the highest level of professionalism from our educators. Bringing all Rhode Island students to proficiency so they can lead fulfilling and productive lives, succeed in academic and employment settings, and contribute to society demands a profession that exists primarily to meet student needs. The development of professional standards for educators, the enforcement of certification requirements, and the regular evaluation of educators address the standards of performance for our profession. As educators who accept the public trust to work in our schools, we also accept the responsibility for professional practice that demonstrates ethical conduct and responsibility. The Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility establishes a set of principles to guide the conduct of Rhode Island's certified educators and the assessment of conduct in situations that have professional and ethical implications.

As educators, our first responsibility is to our students and to assuring that all students achieve at high levels. As professionals, we also have personal responsibility for establishing high personal standards and monitoring our attainment of these standards. As members of school, district, and professional communities, we are responsible for working collaboratively with others to pursue collective goals. Parents and community members are also important partners in pursuing educational goals. As educators we are also responsible for supporting the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents in assuring that only qualified teachers are entrusted with our state's classrooms.

The Code contains five core principles that govern the responsibilities and commitments of Rhode Island Educators. Consistent with applicable law, the Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility shall serve as a basis for decisions on issues pertaining to certification, licensure and employment.

Note: For the purposes of this section, "educator" means a person: who is applying for, who holds or who is employed under a teaching certificate, administrator certificate, support personnel certificate or other related permit or endorsement issued by the Board of Regents of Elementary and Secondary Education; other public school employees who may be licensed through other professional bodies (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists) and are responsible for the education of children; and anyone who is applying for or is employed as a teacher assistant in a Rhode Island public school.

Approved for Public Hearing

1. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS' FIRST COMMITMENT IS TO ENSURING THAT ALL STUDENTS ACHIEVE AT THE HIGH LEVELS NEEDED TO LEAD FULFILLING AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES, TO SUCCEED IN ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS, AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS:

- Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student.
- Act upon the belief that all students can learn.
- Establish high expectations and provide instruction that challenges all students.
- Recognize the differences among students and provide the appropriate educational supports and instructional differentiation responsive to individual needs.
- Address the uniqueness of each student and endeavor to maximize learning through personalization of the educational experience for each student.
- Promote the right and responsibility of students to explore ideas, to develop skills, and to acquire knowledge necessary to be contributing members to society.
- Endeavor to present facts and provide access to all points of view without deliberate distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.
- Assure that their classrooms are environments characterized by respect for and equal opportunity for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, gender, religion, economic status, disability or sexual orientation.
- Promote the development of character and civic responsibility in their students.
- Maintain confidentiality of all student information and dispense that information only when required by professional practice or state or federal law.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times, both in and outside the classroom.

Approved for Public Hearing

2. RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS ARE COMMITTED TO ESTABLISHING HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THEIR PRACTICE AND STRIVING TO MEET THESE STANDARDS THROUGH THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS:

- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both subject matter knowledge and teaching skills.
- Develop personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards, student achievement, and school district initiatives and implement a course of professional development to support attaining the goals.
- Actively engage in professional learning communities and seek feedback in order to improve their performance.
- Examine their practice on a regular basis to expand their knowledge base, broaden their skills, and incorporate new ideas.
- Pursue only those educational positions or assignments for which they have the appropriate educational certification and credentials and for which they have appropriate professional qualification.
- Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment.
- Refrain from using institutional or professional privileges for personal advantage.

Approved for Public Hearing

3. RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS ARE COMMITTED TO WORK WITH SCHOOL AND DISTRICT COLLEAGUES AND AS MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES THAT WILL FURTHER STUDENT LEARNING.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS:

- Work effectively with other professionals on curriculum development, instructional initiatives, assessment programs, and professional development.
- Assume responsibility for working with colleagues to assure their school meets local and state educational objectives.
- Encourage and support staffing decisions that are made based on the best interests of students.
- Collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- Support colleagues in developing and maintaining a work environment that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity free of pressure to act in ways that are not in the best interests of students.
- Encourage the participation of teachers in the process of educational decision making.
- Encourage promising candidates who are interested in education to learn about the opportunities and the challenges of a career in education and support those who pursue careers through informal induction into the profession as they develop the competence and qualifications to become effective educators.
- Maintain integrity regarding the acceptance of any gratuity, gift or other compensation that might impair or influence professional decisions or actions.

Approved for Public Hearing

4. RESPONSIBILITY TO PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND THE COMMUNITY

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS ARE COMMITTED TO COLLABORATE WITH PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES TO OFFER A QUALITY EDUCATION TO ALL STUDENTS.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS:

- Make concerted efforts to communicate with parents and families in a way that shares all information necessary to become meaningful partners in the child's education.
- Endeavor to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in their community and in their classrooms.
- Endeavor to assure equal educational opportunities for all children in the community.
- Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to support students.
- Maintain a positive and active relationship with students' parents, families, and other members of the community.
- Distinguish between their personal opinion and official policies of the school or educational organization when communicating with parents, families, and the community.

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5. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF REGENTS

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS DEMONSTRATE ACOMMITTMENT TO RHODE ISLAND STANDARDS FOR EDUCATOR QUALITY THROUGH CERTIFICATIONREQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE INITIATIVES WITHIN THEIR DISTRICTS.

RHODE ISLAND EDUCATORS:

- Provide accurate, truthful, and complete information to the Rhode Island Department of Education concerning all certification matters.
- Recognize that meeting certification requirements is a pre-condition to any contractual agreement for a position that requires certification in Rhode Island schools.
- Engage in ongoing appropriate professional development for all certificates they intend to maintain.
- Accept only those assignments for which they are professionally qualified and hold appropriate certification unless the educator and the district have agreed to the assignment and the district has secured prior approval from RIDE.
- Develop an understanding of state initiatives and support the implementation of these initiatives within their schools and districts.
- Maintain the security of standardized testing materials that comprise state assessment programs.
- Further the mission, policies, and regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents.

Approved for Public Hearing