

**Randy Stokes**  
**Denial with Stipulation**

---

**The Background:**

*Prior History:* N/A

*Facts:* On October 13, 2016, Mr. Stokes's Mississippi license was revoked/voluntarily surrendered due to allegations that he followed a female student into the restroom and made a pass at her. He was denied reinstatement of his Mississippi license in December 2018. On September 24, 2020, Mr. Stokes applied for reinstatement of his Mississippi license and requested a hearing. The hearing subcommittee unanimously voted to reinstate his license and place him on probation for three years with required counseling. In June 2021, Mr. Stokes applied to reactivate his expired Tennessee license and also applied for a Practitioner Teacher license.

*Applicable Rule*

*/Law:* 0520-02-03-.09(1)(e) defines Inappropriate Communication (Non-explicit) as any communication between an educator and a student that is beyond the scope of the educator's professional responsibilities. Examples of such non-explicit inappropriate communications include, but are not limited to, those communications that discuss the educator's or student's past or current romantic relationships; those that include the use of profanities or obscene language; those that are harassing, intimidating, or bullying; those that attempt to establish an inappropriate personal relationship with a student; and those that are related to personal or confidential information regarding another school staff member or student.

0520-02-03-.09(1)(k) defines 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(1)(h) provides that the Board may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for denial, formal reprimand, suspension, or revocation of a license or certificate in another jurisdiction for reasons which would justify denial, formal reprimand, suspension, or revocation under this rule.

0520-02-03-.09(3)(i) provides that the Board 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(3)(j) provides that the Board may revoke, suspend, formally reprimand, or refuse to issue or renew an educator's license for any offense contained in paragraphs (4) and/or (5) of this rule.

0520-02-03-.09(5)(a)(5)(i) provides that an individual holding an educator's license who is found to have engaged in non-explicit inappropriate communication with a student shall be subject to a disciplinary action within the range of a suspension for no less than three (3) months 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 a disciplinary action within the range of a formal reprimand up to and including revocation.

0520-02-03-.09(8)(a) provides an individual who has been denied an educator license may reapply for a license at any point after denial provided the individual has complied with any terms imposed in the order of denial. If the individual indicates an affirmative answer on the personal affirmation section of the application for a Tennessee educator license, the individual shall show why the license should be issued despite the individual's affirmative answers. Issuance of a license is considered on a case-by-case basis and the burden of proof rests with the individual applying for the license. An application for issuance of a license may be denied if an action against the individual's license has been taken or is pending in another state.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(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. § 49-5-1003(b)(8) provides that an educator shall make reasonable effort to protect the emotional well-being of the student.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(9) provides that an educator shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(14) provides that an educator shall ensure interactions with the student take place in transparent and appropriate settings.

T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(b)(19) provides that an educator shall maintain a professional approach with the student at all times.

*Status:*

Respondent was notified by certified mail of the Board's intent to **deny his application for a Tennessee educator license** based upon these findings with the stipulation that he complete all terms of probation required by Mississippi before reapplying. Respondent was also provided Board policy with respect to requesting permission to speak on his behalf regarding his Tennessee educator license application. Respondent received said notice.

**Board Action Consistency Considerations:**

N/A

**The Recommendation:**

The Board staff recommends that Mr. Stokes's Tennessee educator licensure applications be denied.