
Jason Michael James
Revocation/Voluntary Surrender

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Mr. James, an educator with Campbell County Schools, inappropriately communicated with a student by sending the student private messages via social media. Mr. James initiated social media communications approximately twenty (20) times prior to the student graduating. Social media communications included comments regarding photos posted by the student, and other flirtatious communications of a non-explicit nature.

Mr. James resigned his position with Campbell County Schools.

Applicable Rule

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

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(3)(i) provides that 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(3)(j) provides that the State Board of Education 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.

Status: Respondent was notified by certified mail of the Board's intent to **revoke** his educator license based upon these findings. Respondent received said notice. Respondent agreed to voluntarily surrender his license and not reapply for restoration of his license for a period of five (5) years from the date of approval of the signed Consent Order. The Board staff recommends that the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent for the surrender of his license.

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

May 2019 – Board approved the voluntary surrender/revocation of an educator's license for having inappropriate communication with students via text messaging. The surrender lasts for a period of five (5) years at which point the individual can apply for restoration at the Board's discretion.

July 2019 – Board approved the voluntary surrender/revocation of an educator's license for engaging in inappropriate communications with students. The surrender lasts for a period of five (5) years at which point the individual can apply for restoration at the Board's discretion.

July 2020 – Board approved the voluntary surrender/revocation of an educator's license for engaging in inappropriate communications with students and after he pleaded guilty to contributing to delinquency of a minor (misdemeanor). The surrender lasts for a period of five (5) years at which point the individual can apply for restoration at the Board's discretion.

May 2021 – Board approved the voluntary surrender/revocation of an educator's license for engaging in non-explicit inappropriate communication with students. There was no investigation of this matter by the Department of Children's Services, and no criminal charges were filed. The surrender lasts for a period of five (5) years at which point the individual can apply for restoration at the Board's discretion.

The Recommendation:

The Board staff recommends that the Board approve the signed Consent Order submitted by the Respondent based upon the facts and applicable rule noted above.