

**Lisa A. Taylor
Formal Reprimand**

The Background:

Prior History: N/A

Facts: Ms. Taylor repeated a statement of a student that contained both profanity and a racial slur. Ms. Taylor was interviewed and did not deny making the statement. During the interview with Knox County Schools, Ms. Taylor stated that a student used profanity and a racial slur in expressing his frustration to her. Ms. Taylor then repeated the student's statement back aloud, and the students laughed at her. The school's investigation determined that Ms. Taylor used inappropriate language in the workplace, including profanity and racially derogatory remarks.

Knox County issued Ms. Taylor a written reprimand, placed her on administrative leave for three (3) days without pay and administratively reassigned her until her retirement date of December 17, 2021.

Applicable Rule

/Law: T.C.A. § 49-5-1003(19) provides that in fulfillment of this obligation to the student, 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 Other 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) 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) 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 **formally reprimand** her Tennessee educator license based upon these findings. Respondent received said notice.

Board Action Consistency Considerations:

February 2020 – The Board voted to approve the formal reprimand of an educator's license for using a racial slur when telling a personal story to students.

February 2020 – The Board voted to approve the three (3) month suspension of an educator's license for using a racial slur and discussing drinking/hangovers with students.

The Recommendation:

The Board staff recommends that Ms. Taylor's Tennessee educator license be formally reprimanded.