

## PRINCIPLE I

### RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION

The professional educator is aware that trust in the profession depends upon a level of professional conduct and responsibility that may be higher than required by law. This entails holding one and other educators to the same ethical standards.

**A.** *The professional educator demonstrates responsibility to oneself as an ethical professional by:*

1. Acknowledging that lack of awareness, knowledge, or understanding of the Code is not, in itself, a defense of unethical conduct;
2. Knowing and upholding the procedures, policies, laws and regulations relevant to professional practice regardless of personal views;
3. Holding oneself responsible for ethical conduct;
4. Monitoring and maintaining sound mental, physical, and emotional health necessary to perform duties and services of any professional assignment; and taking appropriate measures when personal or health-related issues may interfere with work-related duties;
5. Refraining from professional or personal activity that may lead to reducing one's effectiveness within the school community;
6. Avoiding the use of one's position for personal gain and avoiding the appearance of impropriety;
7. Taking responsibility and credit only for work actually performed or produced, and acknowledging the work and contributions made by others.

**B.** *The professional educator fulfills the obligation to address and attempt to resolve ethical issues by:*

1. Confronting and taking reasonable steps to resolve conflicts between the Code and the implicit or explicit demands of a person or organization;
2. Maintaining fidelity to the Code by taking proactive steps when having reason to believe that another educator may be approaching or involved in an ethically compromising situation;
3. Neither discriminating nor retaliating against a person on the basis of having made an ethical complaint;
4. Neither filing nor encouraging frivolous ethical complaints solely to harm or retaliate;
5. Cooperating fully during ethics investigations and proceedings.

**C.** *The professional educator promotes and advances the profession within and beyond the school community by:*

1. Influencing and supporting decisions and actions that positively impact teaching and learning, educational leadership and student services;
2. Engaging in respectful discourse regarding issues that impact the profession;
3. Enhancing one's professional effectiveness by staying current with ethical principles and decisions from relevant sources including professional organizations;
4. Actively participating in educational and professional organizations and associations;
5. Advocating for adequate resources and facilities to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

## PRINCIPLE II

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

The professional educator is committed to the highest levels of professional and ethical practice, including demonstration of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for professional competence.

**A.** *The professional educator demonstrates commitment to high standards of practice through:*

1. Incorporating into one's practice state and national standards, including those specific to one's discipline;
2. Using the Model Code of Educator Ethics and other ethics codes unique to one's discipline to guide and frame educational decision-making;
3. Advocating for equitable educational opportunities for all students;
4. Accepting the responsibilities, performing duties and providing services corresponding to the area of certification, licensure, and training of one's position;
5. Reflecting upon and assessing one's professional skills, content knowledge, and competency on an ongoing basis; and
6. Committing to ongoing professional learning.

**B.** *The professional educator demonstrates responsible use of data, materials, research and assessment by:*

1. Appropriately recognizing others' work by citing data or materials from published, unpublished, or electronic sources when disseminating information;
2. Using developmentally appropriate assessments for the purposes for which they are intended and for which they have been validated to guide educational decisions;
3. Conducting research in an ethical and responsible manner with appropriate permission and supervision;
4. Seeking and using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice;
5. Creating, maintaining, disseminating, storing, retaining and disposing of records and data relating to one's research and practice, in accordance with district policy, state and federal laws; and
6. Using data, data sources, or findings accurately and reliably.

**C.** *The professional educator acts in the best interest of all students by:*

1. Increasing students' access to the curriculum, activities, and resources in order to provide a quality and equitable educational experience;
2. Working to engage the school community to close achievement, opportunity, and attainment gaps; and
3. Protecting students from any practice that harms or has the potential to harm students.

## PRINCIPLE III

### RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

The professional educator has a primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect. The professional educator promotes the health, safety and well being of students by establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries.

**A.** *The professional educator respects the rights and dignity of students by:*

1. Respecting students by taking into account their age, gender, culture, setting and socioeconomic context;
2. Interacting with students with transparency and in appropriate settings;
3. Communicating with students in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner;
4. Taking into account how appearance and dress can affect one's interactions and relationships with students;
5. Considering the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to students;
6. Engaging in physical contact with students only when there is a clearly defined purpose that benefits the student and continually keeps the safety and well-being of the student in mind;
7. Avoiding multiple relationship with students which might impair objectivity and increase the risk of harm to student learning or well-being or decrease educator effectiveness;
8. Acknowledging that there are no circumstances that allow for educators to engage in romantic or sexual relationships with students;
9. Considering the ramifications of entering into an adult relationship of any kind with a former student, including but not limited to, any potential harm to the former student, public perception, and the possible impact on the educator's career. The professional educator ensures that the adult relationship was not started while the former student was in school.

**B.** *The professional educator demonstrates an ethic of care through:*

1. Seeking to understand students' educational, academic, personal and social needs as well as students' values, beliefs, and cultural background;
2. Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual student including, but not limited to, actual and perceived gender, gender expression, gender identity, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and culture; and
3. Establishing and maintaining an environment that promotes the emotional, intellectual, physical, and sexual safety of all students.

**C.** *The professional educator maintains student trust and confidentiality when interacting with students in a developmentally appropriate manner and within appropriate limits by:*

1. Respecting the privacy of students and the need to hold in confidence certain forms of student communication, documents, or information obtained in the course of professional practice;
2. Upholding parents'/guardians' legal rights, as well as any legal requirements to reveal information related to legitimate concerns for the well-being of a student; and
3. Protecting the confidentiality of student records and releasing personal data in accordance with prescribed state and federal laws and local policies.

## PRINCIPLE IV

### RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The professional educator promotes positive relationships and effective interactions, with members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries.

**A.** *The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with parents/guardians by:*

1. Communicating with parents/guardians in a timely and respectful manner that represents the students' best interests;
2. Demonstrating a commitment to equality, equity, and inclusion as well as respecting and accommodating diversity among members of the school community;
3. Considering the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to parents/guardians; and
4. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality with respect to student information disclosed by or to parents/guardians unless required by law.

**B.** *The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with colleagues by:*

1. Respecting colleagues as fellow professionals and maintaining civility when differences arise;
2. Resolving conflicts, whenever possible, privately and respectfully and in accordance with district policy;
3. Keeping student safety, education, and health paramount by maintaining and sharing educational records appropriately and objectively in accordance with local policies and state and federal laws;
4. Collaborating with colleagues in a manner that supports academic achievement and related goals that promote the best interests of students;
5. Enhancing the professional growth and development of new educators by supporting effective field experiences, mentoring or induction activities across the career continuum;
6. Ensuring that educators who are assigned to participate as mentors for new educators, cooperating teachers, or other teacher leadership positions are prepared and supervised to assume these roles;
7. Ensuring that educators are assigned to positions in accordance with their educational credentials, preparation, and experience in order to maximize students' opportunities and achievement; and
8. Working to ensure a workplace environment that is free from harassment.

**C.** *The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with the community and other stakeholders by:*

1. Advocating for policies and laws that the educator supports as promoting the education and well-being of students and families;
2. Collaborating with community agencies, organizations, and individuals in order to advance students' best interests without regard to personal reward or remuneration; and
3. Maintaining the highest professional standards of accuracy, honesty, and appropriate disclosure of information when representing the school or district within the community and in public communications.

## RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The professional educator promotes positive relationships and effective interactions, with members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries.

**D.** *The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with employers by:*

1. Using property, facilities, materials, and resources in accordance with local policies and state and federal laws;
2. Respecting intellectual property ownership rights (e.g. original lesson plans, district level curricula, syllabi, gradebooks, etc.) when sharing materials;
3. Exhibiting personal and professional conduct that is in the best interest of the organization, learning community, school community, and profession; and
4. Considering the implications of offering or accepting gifts and/or preferential treatment by vendors or an individual in a position of professional influence or power.

**E.** *The professional educator understands the problematic nature of multiple relationships by:*

1. Considering the risks that multiple relationships might impair objectivity and increase the likelihood of harm to students' learning and well-being or diminish educator effectiveness;
2. Considering the risks and benefits of a professional relationship with someone with whom the educator has had a past personal relationship and vice versa;
3. Considering the implications and possible ramifications of engaging in a personal or professional relationship with parents and guardians, student teachers, colleagues, and supervisors; and
4. Ensuring that professional responsibilities to paraprofessionals, student teachers or interns do not interfere with responsibilities to students, their learning, and well-being.

## RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The professional educator considers the impact of consuming, creating, distributing and communicating information through all technologies. The ethical educator is vigilant to ensure appropriate boundaries of time, place and role are maintained when using electronic communication.

**A.** *The professional educator uses technology in a responsible manner by:*

1. Using social media responsibly, transparently, and primarily for purposes of teaching and learning per school and district policy. The professional educator considers the ramifications of using social media and direct communication via technology on one's interactions with students, colleagues, and the general public;
2. Staying abreast of current trends and uses of school technology;
3. Promoting the benefits of and clarifying the limitations of various appropriate technological applications with colleagues, appropriate school personnel, parents, and community members;
4. Knowing how to access, document and use proprietary materials and understanding how to recognize and prevent plagiarism by students and educators;
5. Understanding and abiding by the district's policy on the use of technology and communication;
6. Recognizing that some electronic communications are records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and state public access laws and should consider the implications of sharing sensitive information electronically either via professional or personal devices/accounts; and
7. Exercising prudence in maintaining separate and professional virtual profiles, keeping personal and professional lives distinct.

**B.** *The professional educator ensures students' safety and well-being when using technology by:*

1. Being vigilant in identifying, addressing and reporting (when appropriate and in accordance with local district, state, and federal policy) inappropriate and illegal materials/images in electronic or other forms;
2. Respecting the privacy of students' presence on social media unless given consent to view such information or if there is a possibility of evidence of a risk of harm to the student or others; and
3. Monitoring to the extent practical and appropriately reporting information concerning possible cyber bullying incidents and their potential impact on the student learning environment.

**C.** *The professional educator maintains confidentiality in the use of technology by:*

1. Taking appropriate and reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of electronic or computer technology;
2. Understanding the intent of Federal Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) and how it applies to sharing electronic student records;
3. Ensuring that the rights of third parties, including the right of privacy, are not violated via the use of technologies.

**D.** *The professional educator promotes the appropriate use of technology in educational settings by:*

1. Advocating for equal access to technology for all students, especially those historically underserved;
2. Promoting the benefits of and clarifying the limitations of various appropriate technological applications with colleagues, appropriate school personnel, parents, and community members; and
3. Promoting technological applications (a) that are appropriate for students' individual needs, (b) that students understand how to use and (c) that assist and enhance the teaching and learning process.

## MCEE: The Power of a Common Language

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE), supported by national education organizations that undergird our profession, was developed by a diverse and representative task force of educational practitioners. The MCEE connects the aspirations of professional ethics with the day-to-day realities of the practicing educator.

The MCEE facilitates a broad understanding of what constitutes ethical best practice and helps ensure that educators are equipped with a framework for ethical decision-making.

The MCEE, which can be adopted, adapted, or endorsed, provides a basis for conversations across the profession about the importance of having a common language rooted in professional ethics. These conversations have power.

*The Model Code of Ethics for Educators – Giving the profession a common language to guide professional decision-making.*



## National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics

Established by NASDTEC, the National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics (NCAEE) consists of practitioners and educational partners that represent the profession. NCAEE's mission is to promote and foster an intentional and thoughtful focus on professional ethics for educators. Its role is to provide national leadership in advancing ethical understanding and practice, while promoting awareness and use of the MCEE.



*Founded in 1928, NASDTEC represents professional standards boards, commissions and state departments of education that are responsible for the preparation, licensure, and discipline of educational personnel. Associate members include constituent groups with an interest in the preparation, continuing development, and certification of educational personnel.*

*More information on NASDTEC and the development of the MCEE may be found at [www.nasdtec.net](http://www.nasdtec.net).*

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OVERVIEW

## Model Code of Ethics for Educators

*The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) serves as a guide for future and current educators faced with the complexities of P-12 education. The code establishes principles for ethical best practice, mindfulness, self-reflection and decision-making, setting the groundwork for self-regulation and self-accountability. The establishment of this professional code of ethics by educators for educators honors the public trust and upholds the dignity of the profession.*

## WELCOME

There is a movement growing within the greater P-12 and educator preparation educational communities to ensure educators and prospective educators understand how professional decision-making can impact the safety and well-being of children, as well as the culture and mission of the school. This increased focus on examining, understanding, and informing best practice in educator decision-making is a critical part of the mission of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC).

A professional code of ethics sets a higher threshold than regulatory codes of conduct. A code of conduct provides absolutes for employment, licensure, and/or criminal sanctions. The MCEE, however, helps mitigate the risks inherent within the profession and is designed as a guide for current and future educators to construct the best course of action when faced with ethical dilemmas, providing a basis for educator learning, self-reflection, and self-accountability.

For more information, visit [www.nasdtec.net](http://www.nasdtec.net)

