

Public Comment of Susan Kaiser
Committee of Professional Standards. 12/18/19

Good Morning!

For the record my name is Susan Kaiser. I am a National Board Certified teacher and have been a middle school science educator for 24 years. I also served as a member of the Nevada Educator Code of Ethics Advisory Group to review the Model Code of Educator Ethics also known as the MCEE. The five principles of the MCEE are broad and include educator responsibilities to the Profession, Professional Competence, Students, School Community and Use of Technology and include 86 separate examples of educator responsibilities. The five principles describe the nuanced relationships between all members interacting in a school community with students, parents, teachers, administrators and all categories of service providers.

After a year of reviewing the MCEE and looking closely at the ready-made professional development options we identified several issues of concern. First, the activities were almost exclusively focused on interactions only between students and classroom educators neglecting some principles entirely. Secondly, a readability assessment of the written text of the trainings leveled the materials at Grade 14 causing concern that some individual employee categories or employees with limited English language abilities may encounter difficulty in comprehending elements of the lessons.

Given these deficits the panel members' preferred option is to develop our own training materials to provide the necessary professional development to all categories of educators including but not limited to bus drivers, nutrition services, office staff, paraprofessionals in addition to classroom educators and administrators. Our colleagues need and deserve to receive this training during their work hours in order to engage in meaningful discussions and to practice what to do when encountering an ethical situation. Employees should be compensated for the time invested in becoming proficient in recognizing and responding appropriately according to the MCEE. Providing this setting for training will allow for a deeper understanding of how to best interact with students, parents and colleagues while remaining in compliance with the five principles of the MCEE.

During our panel discussion a suggestion was made to create a working group to identify appropriate materials, role-play scenarios and discussion exercises to allow our employees to gain a full understanding of all five principles of the MCEE. If a working group is created, I would like to contribute to the development of these training materials and would gladly volunteer my time.

Nevada educators are already overloaded with trainings for safety, testing protocols, Special Education and many more topics. There may be a temptation to provide yet another sit-and-get video followed by a quiz to meet the training requirement. Frankly, this type of training is mind numbing and many times is not effective in developing the desired knowledge. I strongly urge the members of the commission to recognize the value in all educators being able to know and apply the MCEE in their daily work.

Educators already face many challenges. Adhering to the MCEE should not be one more. The MCEE is a detailed and comprehensive tool that requires study, discussion and practice to clearly interpret the proper response in a myriad number of scenarios that unfold every day in our schools. Our colleagues deserve meaningful, timely professional development with compensation. To do anything less opposes the spirit of the MCEE.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today.