

TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 29 - PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES CASE DETERMINATIONS
BY THE STATE BOARD

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001 General Information

001.01 Statutory Authority. Sections 79-1284 and 79-328(5)(j) R.R.S. authorize the Board to adopt regulations for carrying out its responsibilities, which include developing standards for revocation and suspension of certificates issued by the Board. Section 79-1283 R.R.S. provides for the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission to make recommendations to the Board in certain cases where there is a public school certificate holder and also provides for a hearing officer to make recommendations to the Board in certain cases where there is a nonpublic school certificate holder.

001.02 Scope and Application of this Chapter. This chapter governs procedures before the Board when a recommendation has been made to the Board by the Professional Practices Commission pursuant to 95 Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 1, or 95 NAC 2, in public school certificate cases, or by a Board-appointed hearing officer pursuant to 92 NAC 28 in nonpublic school certificate cases.

001.03 Related Regulations. Standards of professional practices and ethics for holders of both public and nonpublic school certificates are contained in 92 NAC 27. Procedures for hearings in public school certificate cases are contained in 92 NAC 28 and 95 NAC 1. Procedures for investigation in all cases and hearings in nonpublic school certificate cases are contained in 92 NAC 28. Regulations for the issuance of public school and nonpublic school certificates are contained in 92 NAC 21. Procedures for the reinstatement of a public school certificate are contained in 95 NAC 2.

002 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

002.01 Administrator shall mean any holder of a public or nonpublic certificate for administration or supervision issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.02 Admonishment shall mean a private sanction to a certificate holder that further unprofessional or unethical conduct may result in more serious action, including the suspension or revocation of a certificate. This sanction may be imposed by the Commissioner, Commission, or Board.

002.03 Board shall mean the State Board of Education.

002.04 Certificated person shall mean any holder of a certificate issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

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002.05 Commission shall mean the Professional Practices Commission.

002.06 Commissioner shall mean the State Commissioner of Education.

002.07 Department shall mean the Nebraska State Department of Education, which is comprised of the Board and the Commissioner.

002.08 Parties shall mean petitioner and respondent.

002.09 Petitioner shall mean the Commissioner pursuant to 95 NAC 1 or 92 NAC 28.

002.10 Reprimand shall mean a public sanction criticizing or rebuking a certificate holder for unprofessional or unethical conduct. This sanction may be imposed by the Commissioner, Commission, or Board.

002.11 Respondent shall mean any educator who shall be charged in a petition under 92 NAC 28 or 95 NAC 1 with allegedly violating standards of professional ethics or practices as contained in 92 NAC 27.

002.12 Revocation shall mean a public sanction withdrawing or canceling a certificate holder's certificate for a certain period of time. At the expiration of the revocation period, the former certificate holder may apply for reinstatement in accordance with 92 NAC 29. This sanction may be imposed by the Board.

002.13 Special services counselor shall mean any person holding a special services counseling certificate issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.14 Suspension shall mean a public sanction withdrawing or canceling a certificate holder's certificate for a certain period of time. The certificate is automatically reinstated at the expiration of the suspension period if it has not expired during the period of suspension. This sanction may be imposed by the Board.

002.15 Teacher shall mean any holder of a Nebraska public or nonpublic certificate for teaching issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

003 Recommendation to the Board

003.01 Filing Recommendations with the Board. Recommendations of the Commission pursuant to 95 NAC 1, or of a hearing officer appointed under 92 NAC 28, which are filed with the Board shall include recommended findings of fact, recommended conclusions of law, and a recommended decision. Such recommendations shall also include a verbatim transcript of the hearing and a copy of all pleadings and exhibits.

003.02 Format. All filings shall be typed on 8 1/2 x 11 inch white paper. Exhibits shall be reduced, if possible, to 8 1/2 x 11 inch white paper.

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003.03 Copies to Parties. At the time of filing of recommendations, the Commission or the hearing officer shall send a copy of the findings, conclusions, and recommended decision to the respondent certified mail, return receipt requested and to the petitioner by mail or hand delivery.

004 Review of Recommendations

004.01 Scheduling Review Hearing. The Board shall schedule a hearing for the purpose of reviewing the recommendations received from the Commission or hearing officer, and shall notify the parties and Commission or hearing officer of the time and location by mailing or delivering a notice at least 21 days prior to such scheduled hearing.

004.02 Conduct of Review Hearing. The review hearing shall be conducted as follows:

004.02A The Board President or any other member designated by the Board to preside shall open and close the proceedings, enter the recommendations of the Commission or hearing officer into the record, and shall rule on all matters, although such rulings may be altered or reversed at the time of such rulings by majority vote of the Board members present for the review hearing.

004.02B A representative of the Commission or the hearing officer whose recommendations are being considered shall be given an opportunity to summarize the recommendations and address questions from the Board.

004.02C The petitioner and respondent shall each be given an opportunity to present oral arguments regarding the recommendations. The Board may set time limits for such arguments.

004.02D The Board shall receive no additional evidence and shall limit summarizations and oral arguments to matters reflected in the record before it.

005 Disposition of Cases

005.01 Order of Board. Following the review hearing, the Board shall enter an order setting forth findings of fact, conclusions of law, and decision. A copy of such an order shall be mailed to each party.

005.02 Suspension or Revocation Order. An order of suspension or revocation terminates the employment of such person. The Board shall immediately notify the school or school district where such person is employed of such revocation or suspension. The revocation or suspension of a person's certificate by the Board automatically shall revoke or suspend any and all Department certificates held by the person.

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005.03 Admonishments or Reprimands. The Board may issue admonishments or reprimands. Release of information about such orders shall be governed by section 007.

005.04 Filing of Order. A copy of the order directing suspension or revocation shall be filed with the Teacher Certification unit of the Department.

006 Reinstatement

006.01 Former Public School Certificate Holders. The application, filing, and hearing procedures for reinstatement of public school certificates are governed by 95 NAC 2.

006.02 Former Nonpublic School Certificate Holders. Upon expiration of the time period fixed in the revocation order of the Board, a person whose nonpublic school certificate has been revoked may petition the Board for reinstatement of his or her certificate.

006.03 Reinstatement Petition. Petitions to the Board shall be in writing and shall contain the following information:

006.03A The venue shown as "BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION";

006.03B A heading captioned "IN THE MATTER OF THE REINSTATEMENT OF:";

006.03C The name and address of the applicant;

006.03D The case number and the caption "PETITION FOR REINSTATEMENT" under the case number.

006.03E A statement that "The undersigned applicant for reinstatement of a revoked Nebraska nonpublic teaching, nonpublic administrative, or nonpublic special services counseling certificate alleges:";

006.03E1 Applicant shall set forth the type, rank, level, endorsements, and expiration dates of the certificate(s) revoked, and his or her social security number.

006.03E2 Applicant shall set forth the Final Decision of the Board revoking the certificate(s).

006.03E3 Applicant shall set forth the name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of all witnesses, including applicant, that will testify on behalf of petitioner at the hearing.

006.03E4 Applicant shall set forth the name(s), address(es), telephone number(s), and date(s) of employment for all employers

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of applicant during the period of certificate revocation. If unemployed for over three months during any time period, the applicant shall set forth his or her activities during that time period.

006.03F A statement indicating the applicant has fully complied with the Order of Revocation that he or she will not, in the future, engage in any practice which is listed in the statutes as grounds for revocation or suspension of a certificate, and that he or she is familiar with the criteria of professional practices adopted as 92 NAC 27.

006.03G The applicant's signed, dated, and notarized affirmation that the statements in the petition are true, correct, and complete to the best of his or her knowledge and belief.

006.04 Filing of Petition. The petition shall be filed with the Board and a copy of the petition shall be served upon the Commissioner.

006.04A Upon receipt of the Petition for Reinstatement, the Commissioner or his or her designee may investigate the applicant in order to determine the propriety of contesting the petition.

006.04B If the Commissioner contests the petition, he or she shall file an Answer to the petition with the Board within thirty (30) days from the date the petition was filed, setting forth the grounds for objection.

006.04C Upon the filing of an Answer by the Commissioner, the Board shall appoint a hearing officer under the terms and conditions provided in 92 NAC 28-005.

006.04D If the Commissioner does not contest the Reinstatement Petition, he or she shall forward either a written recommendation in support of petition or a written document with no recommendation to the Board.

006.05 Reinstatement Hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures established in 92 NAC 28, as modified below.

006.05A The burden shall be upon the applicant to prove to the hearing officer by a preponderance of the evidence that applicant meets all certification requirements in force at the time of the application.

006.06 Board Review. The recommendations of the Commission or of a hearing officer shall include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation of reinstatement or a recommendation of denial of reinstatement. Such recommendations shall be in writing and shall also include a summary of the testimony of the hearing in addition to a copy of all pleadings and exhibits.

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006.06A The format and filing requirements for a board review shall be in accordance with the provisions of section 003.02 and section 003.03 of this chapter.

006.06B The board review and disposition shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures established in section 004 and section 005 of this chapter.

007 Publicity

007.01 Confidential Matters. The Department may withhold the following records from the public as confidential documents, except as provided in 007.04:

007.01A Personal information regarding a student, prospective student, or former student other than routine directory information;

007.01B Medical records in any form concerning any person;

007.01C Records or documents which represent the work product of an attorney or public body;

007.01D Investigative records or documents developed or received by the Department relating to possible unprofessional or unethical conduct on the part of a school certificate holder; and

007.01E Any other record or document, the release of which may cause needless injury to the reputation of a witness, complainant, or other person.

007.02 Loss of Confidential Status. The records or documents outlined in 007.01 remain confidential unless:

007.02A Publicly disclosed in an open court, open administrative proceeding, or open meeting, or disclosed by a public entity pursuant to its duties;

007.02B The Department agrees to the release and the certificate holder waives confidentiality, either in writing or by public disclosure of information, regarding the matter; or

007.02C The certificate holder voluntarily surrenders his or her certificate(s), in which case the voluntary surrender becomes public record, and information regarding any investigation may be provided to any other state or federal agency.

007.03 Limited Disclosure. A limited disclosure of information is permitted in the following situations:

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007.03A The sanction imposed with a dismissal, settlement agreement or other disposition of a complaint or petition shall be reported to the complainant; and

007.03B An investigator may release information necessary to identify the matter under investigation to potential witnesses in the course of an investigation.

007.04 Specific Documents. The following provisions regarding confidentiality of various documents shall apply:

007.04A A complaint shall not be made public;

007.04B An investigator's report shall not be made public;

007.04C A petition shall be a public record upon filing;

007.04D An answer shall be a public record upon filing;

007.04E A settlement agreement shall not be made public, except as provided in 007.03A;

007.04F A final order shall be a public record upon filing; and

007.04G A reinstatement application shall be a public record upon filing.

007.05 Deletion of Information. Any record or document to be made public which contains information that may cause needless injury to a complainant, witness, or other person, or information that may lead to the personal identification of a student, shall be deleted from every record before being made public.

007.06 Purpose. This section is intended to protect the public interest and to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a certificate holder, witness, complainant, or other person. This section is not intended to prohibit the exchange of confidential information with other agencies authorized by the Board to receive such information.

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