



5.32 Educator Standards and LEA Reporting Policy

Draft 2

Date of Last Change:
Authorized By: Utah State Board of Education

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1. This policy establishes professional standards of conduct, ethical expectations, and mandatory reporting requirements for all educators employed by the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB).
- 1.2. This policy incorporates and implements Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Rule R277-217 ~~(Utah Educator Standards and Professional Practices)~~ and establishes a formal governance framework to protect students and maintain the integrity of the education profession.
- 1.3. This policy is intended to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal law, including R277-217, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), ~~20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.; 34 CFR Part 300~~; the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ~~20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99~~, and Utah mandatory reporting statutes ~~(Utah Code § found in Section 62A-4a-403)~~.

2. **Definitions**

- 2.1. Educator – Any individual licensed by the Utah State Board of Education or otherwise authorized to provide instruction or educational services at USDB, including teachers, related service providers, administrators, and any individual acting in an instructional or supervisory capacity, consistent with R277-217-2.
- 2.2. Boundary Violation – Conduct, communication, or interaction that exceeds professional, pedagogical, or safety-based necessity and violates professional boundaries, as contemplated by R277-217-3.
- 2.3. UPPAC – The Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission, established under R277-214, which reviews and makes recommendations regarding educator licensure discipline.

- 2.4. Reporting Party – Any USDB employee, contractor, or volunteer who becomes aware of conduct that may constitute a violation of this policy or R277-217.
3. **Guiding Principles**
- 3.1. USDB adopts the professional standards articulated in R277-217-3, which support and require educators to maintain the highest standards of integrity, responsibility, and ethical conduct.
- 3.2. Educators shall serve as role models and shall conduct themselves in a manner that maintains public trust in the profession and protects the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of students.
- 3.3. In light of the specialized supports and tactile communication inherent to USDB services, educators shall ensure that all physical proximity and student interactions are purposeful, educationally justified, and aligned with established professional boundaries.
4. **Standard1: Responsibility to Students**
- 4.1. Educators shall make the well-being of students the primary concern and shall protect students from conditions harmful to learning, health, or safety.
- 4.2. Educators shall maintain professional boundaries and avoid any conduct that exploits, abuses, or endangers students.
- 4.3. Physical contact shall occur only when clearly required for instructional, medical, behavioral, or safety purposes and shall comply with approved instructional protocols and USDB policies.
- 4.4. Educators are mandatory reporters and shall immediately report suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with Utah Code §62A-4a-403 and related USDB policies.
- 4.5. Educators shall communicate with students respectfully and appropriately in the student's primary mode of communication and shall refrain from discriminatory, demeaning, harassing, or sexually suggestive language.
5. **Standard 2: Responsibility to the Profession**
- 5.1. Educators shall maintain honesty and integrity in all professional practices, including assessment, grading, documentation, licensure, and reporting.
- 5.2. Educators shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws, USBE rules, and USDB policies governing licensure, assignments, evaluation, and conduct.

- 5.3. Educators shall report any criminal charge, arrest, or conviction (excluding minor traffic violations) to the USDB Superintendent or designee within forty-eight (48) hours.
- 5.4. Educators shall protect the confidentiality of student information in compliance with FERPA (~~20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99~~) and IDEA (~~34 CFR §§300.610–300.627~~).
- 6. **Standard 3: Responsibility to the School Community**
 - 6.1. Educators shall maintain professional relationships with parents, guardians, colleagues, and community members and shall communicate in a manner that supports student learning and well-being.
 - 6.2. Educators shall provide equitable access to instruction, accommodations, and services for all students and shall promote inclusive practices consistent with IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- 7. **Prohibited Conduct**
 - 7.1. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following actions identified in R277-217-2:
 - 7.1.1. Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or exploitation of a student.
 - 7.1.2. Engaging in romantic, sexual, or grooming behaviors with a student, regardless of age or perceived consent.
 - 7.1.3. Inappropriate electronic, social media, or digital communication with students.
 - 7.1.4. Possessing, viewing, transmitting, or storing sexually explicit material on school property or through school-issued technology.
 - 7.1.5. Falsification of records, misrepresentation of licensure status, or dishonesty in professional documentation.
 - 7.1.6. Theft, misuse, or misappropriation of school funds, property, or specialized instructional equipment.
- 8. **Reporting Requirements**

- 8.1. All USDB employees have an affirmative duty to report suspected violations of educator standards or professional misconduct to USDB administration.
- 8.2. Reports shall be made promptly to the Superintendent or Human Resources representative.
- 8.3. Failure to report a known or suspected violation constitutes a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action and referral to UPPAC.
- 8.4. Nothing in this policy limits an employee's obligation to report directly to law enforcement or child protective services when required by law.
9. **Investigation and Disciplinary Action**
 - 9.1. USDB shall investigate all reports of suspected misconduct in accordance with R277-217, due process requirements, and applicable confidentiality laws.
 - 9.2. Substantiated violations may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and referral to UPPAC for licensure action pursuant to R277-214 and R277-217.
 - 9.3. USDB shall cooperate fully with USBE, UPPAC, law enforcement, and child protective services as required by law.
10. **Training, Implementation, and Review**
 - 10.1. USDB shall provide training to all educators and administrators at the time of hire and annually thereafter regarding professional standards, boundary expectations, and mandatory reporting obligations ~~(consistent with Utah Code found in Section 53E-6-701 and Section 80-2-602).~~
 - 10.2. This policy shall be reviewed annually and upon revision of R277-217, IDEA regulations, FERPA regulations, or related statutes.
 - 10.3. Revisions shall be communicated promptly to all staff and incorporated into onboarding and annual compliance training.