

Policy Related to Educator Code of Professional Responsibility

The Bristol Warren Regional School District Educator Code of Professional Responsibility establishes a set of principles to guide the conduct of Bristol Warren’s certified educators and the assessment of conduct in situations that have professional and ethical implications. Working with students of the Bristol Warren Regional School District necessitates a public trust and a level of responsibility to its citizens that requires the highest level of professionalism from its educators. Bringing all Bristol Warren Regional School District students to a level of proficiency so they can lead fulfilling and productive lives, succeed in academic and employment settings, and contribute to society demands a profession that exists primarily to meet student needs. As educators who accept the public trust, Bristol Warren Regional School District professionals also must accept the responsibility for professional practice that demonstrates ethical conduct and responsibility.

The first responsibility of the educators of the Bristol Warren Regional School District is to their students and to assuring that all students achieve at high levels. As professionals, they have personal responsibility for establishing high personal standards. As members of school, district, and professional communities, they are responsible for working collaboratively with colleagues, parents and community members to pursue collective goals. As certified educators, they are responsible for supporting the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents in assuring that only qualified teachers are entrusted with our state’s classrooms.

The Code contains five core principles that govern the responsibilities and commitments of Bristol Warren Regional School District educators. Consistent with applicable law and the Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility¹, the Bristol Warren Regional School District Educator Code shall serve as a basis for decisions on employment. This code is a set of commitments which the education community expects all members to honor and practice. These commitments guide professional conduct in all situations with professional and ethical implications. The foundation of this code rests in the core belief that the student is the centerpiece of the profession.

Note: For the purposes of this section, “educator” means a person: who is applying for, who holds or who is employed under a teaching certificate, administrator certificate, support personnel certificate or other related permit or endorsement issued by the Board of Regents of Elementary and Secondary Education; other public school employees who may be licensed through other professional bodies (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists) and are responsible for the education of children; and anyone who is applying for or is employed as a teacher assistant in a Bristol Warren Regional School District school.

Responsibility to Students

Bristol Warren Regional School District educators’ first commitment is to ensure that all students achieve at the high levels needed to lead fulfilling and productive lives, to succeed in academic and employment settings, and to contribute to society. BWRSD educators shall:

- Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student.
- Act upon the belief that all students can learn.
- Establish high expectations and provide instruction that challenges all students.

¹ RI Code of Professional Responsibility www.ride.ri.gov.

- Recognize the differences among students and provide the appropriate educational supports and instructional differentiation responsive to individual needs.
- Address the uniqueness of each student and endeavor to maximize learning through personalization of the educational experience for each student.
- Promote the right and responsibility of students to explore ideas, to develop skills, and to acquire knowledge necessary to be contributing members to society.
- Endeavor to present facts and provide access to all points of view without deliberate distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.
- Assure that their classrooms are environments characterized by respect for and equal opportunity for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, gender, religion, economic status, disability or sexual orientation.
- Promote the development of character and civic responsibility in their students.
- Maintain confidentiality of all student information and dispense that information only when required by professional practice or state or federal law.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times, both in and outside the classroom.

Responsibility to Self

Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall be committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their individual performance.

BWRSD educators shall:

- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both subject matter knowledge and teaching skills.
- Develop personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards, student achievement, and school district initiatives and implement a course of professional development to support attaining the goals.
- Actively engage in professional learning communities and seek feedback in order to improve their performance.
- Examine their practice on a regular basis to expand their knowledge base, broaden their skills, and incorporate new ideas.
- Pursue only those educational positions or assignments for which they have the appropriate educational certification and credentials and for which they have appropriate professional qualification.
- Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment.
- Refrain from using institutional or professional privileges for personal advantage.

Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession

Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall be committed to work with school and district colleagues and as members of professional communities to establish and implement initiatives that will further student learning. Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall:

- Work effectively with other professionals on curriculum development, instructional initiatives, assessment programs, and professional development.
- Assume responsibility for working with colleagues to assure their school meets local and state educational objectives.
- Encourage and support staffing decisions that are made based on the best interests of students.
- Collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- Support colleagues in developing and maintaining a work environment that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity free of pressure to act in ways that are not in the best interests of students.
- Encourage the participation of teachers in the process of educational decision making.
- Encourage promising candidates who are interested in education to learn about the opportunities and the challenges of a career in education and support those who pursue careers through informal induction into the profession as they develop the competence and qualifications to become effective educators.
- Maintain integrity regarding the acceptance of any gratuity, gift or other compensation that might impair or influence professional decisions or actions.

Responsibility to Parents, Families, and the Community

Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall be committed to collaborate with parents, families, and communities to offer a quality education to all students. Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall:

- Make concerted efforts to communicate with parents and families in a way that shares all information necessary to become meaningful partners in the child's education.
- Endeavor to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in their community and in their classrooms.
- Endeavor to assure equal educational opportunities for all children in the community.
- Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to support students.
- Maintain a positive and active relationship with students' parents, families, and other members of the community.
- Distinguish between their personal opinion and official policies of the school or educational organization when communicating with parents, families, and the community.

Responsibility to the Rhode Island Board of Regents

Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall demonstrate a commitment to Rhode Island standards for educator quality through certification requirements and support for the implementation of state initiatives within their district.. Bristol Warren Regional School District educators shall:

- Provide accurate, truthful, and complete information to the Rhode Island Department of Education concerning all certification matters.
- Recognize that meeting certification requirements is a pre-condition to any contractual agreement for a position that requires certification in Rhode Island schools.
- Engage in ongoing appropriate professional development for all certificates they intend to maintain.

- Accept only those assignments for which they are professionally qualified and hold appropriate certification unless the educator and the district have agreed to the assignment and the district has secured prior approval from RIDE.
- Develop an understanding of state initiatives and support the implementation of these initiatives within their schools and districts.
- Maintain the security of standardized testing materials that comprise state assessment programs.
- Further the mission, policies, and regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents.

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BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND