South Dakota State University

SEED 314: Foundations of American Education
AGED 434: Special Methods in Agricultural Education

Ongoing Personal Reflection on Teaching and Learning Practices as a Basis for Making Professional Decisions including the Code of Ethics and advocacy for learners.

The two major National Teachers’ unions and many state codes of law include an ethics code for teachers. In the case of the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and South Dakota Codified Law the, codes of ethics outline the basic principles for decision making by educational professionals.

The main areas are described are commitments or obligations of the professional. These include commitment to the student, commitment to the profession, and commitment to the public. Each is described in more detail by a listing of the attitudes and behaviors a teacher should demonstrate as he/she teaches and lives in a community. The descriptions outline how a teacher is an advocate for learners at various levels. The ethical teacher makes each decision, each day within the ethical code of teachers.

The obligations described are many: teacher must work to help all learners learn and view them as worthy of educational opportunities. Teachers must work to develop in students a willingness to learn and develop an interest in gaining new knowledge. The teacher should not take inappropriate advantage of students for personal gain or expose the student to harmful conditions, including embarrassment. The teacher must honor students by maintaining confidentiality of information obtained while teaching. Teachers must follow the law in terms of reporting suspected abuse of students and threats of injury to self or others.

Teachers must accurately communicate qualifications, must work to elevate the profession and those who serve the profession. The teacher must urge active engagement in professional development and support the growth of all professionals working to educate and guide children. The teacher shall not use his/her position to exploit others and should not accept gifts or favor that might impair his/her judgment or appear to influence professional decisions. The teacher uses his/her skills to better the profession for increasing numbers of children.

The teacher’s commitment to the community/public is to promote democracy and the heritage of our country. The teacher is
expected to be willing to work to promote sound public policy and assume his/her role as a contributing member of our society. The teacher works to make education available for all in meaningful ways. He/she learns about educational issues and thoughtfully considers pros and cons and helps others think through policy issues with the goal to create a society where all, regardless of ethnic or socioeconomic background, can take advantage of an education and the chance to be a productive American.