

CASE REPORT – PROBABLE CAUSE

Position Held: Teacher / Parent Chaperone

Employment Status: Resigned

Complaint Origin: System

Complaint:

The educator, an elementary teacher serving as a chaperone on a high school trip to Europe, was seen consuming alcohol while at the airport and several times during the flight to Paris. Three students and one other chaperone reported the misconduct to school administrators upon their return from the trip. The educator admitted drinking alcohol during the trip and resigned her teaching position with the school district.

Findings of Fact:

Three students and a staff chaperone reported that educator consumed alcohol on a school sponsored trip to Europe. The educator admitted to consuming alcoholic beverages during the trip. The educator resigned from the system.

Standard, Rules or Laws in Complaint:

PSC Rule 505-6-.01 (3c) - The educator was at a school-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol during the course of professional practice.

PSC Rule 505-6-.01 (3j) - The educator failed to demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession by demonstrating conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students;

Investigative Findings:

- The system reported the educator, a second grade teacher, was serving as a chaperone on a high school trip to Europe with her son. Upon return from the trip, one staff chaperone and three students reported that they observed the educator consuming alcoholic beverages during the trip.

- The trip in question reportedly took place during Spring Break. The group of students on the trip consisted of 26 high school seniors, two high school teachers, a high school paraprofessional and the educator.
- The actions of the educator were reported to school officials after the trip when student misbehavior during the trip was addressed by the principal. While addressing the student misbehavior, the educator's behavior was reported.
- Three students and a staff member provided statements to the system investigators in which they reported witnessing the educator consume what they believe was alcoholic beverages.
- The educator was confronted about the allegations by the system investigators. She admitted that she had a glass of wine at the airport and another on the airplane.
- The educator resigned from the system.
- The educator indicated that she was on the trip to accompany her son, who was a high school senior. She stated that she paid her own expenses for the trip and the expenses of her son.
- The school system confirmed that the educator paid for her own expenses for the trip, but that she was one of the four system employees listed as chaperones.
- The system complainant noted that one of the chaperones on the trip was the school board chairman. When questioned about the educator's conduct on the trip, he indicated that he did not observe any unusual behavior or see the educator consume any alcohol.
- The complainant further reported that the educator had been a long time employee of the system, and up to the point of this incident, she had an excellent record as an elementary teacher.

Evidence in the Case File supporting the Findings of Fact:

1. The admissions of the educator
2. The statement of a staff member
3. The statements of three (3) students