

Fostering Ethical Decision-making and Avoiding Missteps

2026-2027



**Georgia Professional
Standards Commission**
Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning

AGENDA

1

**About
GaPSC &
Ethics
Data**

2

**About the
Code of
Ethics**

3

**Scenarios
& AI
Guidance**

4

**Complaints
and
Consequences**

5

**Prevention
Resources**

About GaPSC



MISSION STATEMENT:

“To build the best prepared, best qualified and most ethical educator workforce in the nation.”

VISION STATEMENT:

“Protecting Georgia’s Higher Standard of Learning”

About the Commission

- 9** Teachers (1 from private school)
- 2** Administrators
- 2** School board members
- 2** Higher Education program providers (1 private; 1 public)
- 3** Private sector representatives

Governor-appointed three year terms.



The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (COE)

- ❑ Defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct.
- ❑ Contains 10 standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession.
- ❑ Defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators, and assures the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

Guidelines, Policy, and Law

Local Level

**District or
School
Guidance
and Policy**

**Follow local
reporting policy**

State Policy

**Georgia Code
of Ethics for
Educators**

**Report within
90 days**

State Law

**Official Code of
Georgia
(O.C.G.A),
including
Mandated
Reporter Law**

**Report Controlled
Substances (Drugs)
Within 10 days**

**Report Actual or
Suspected
Student Abuse
(within 24 hours)**

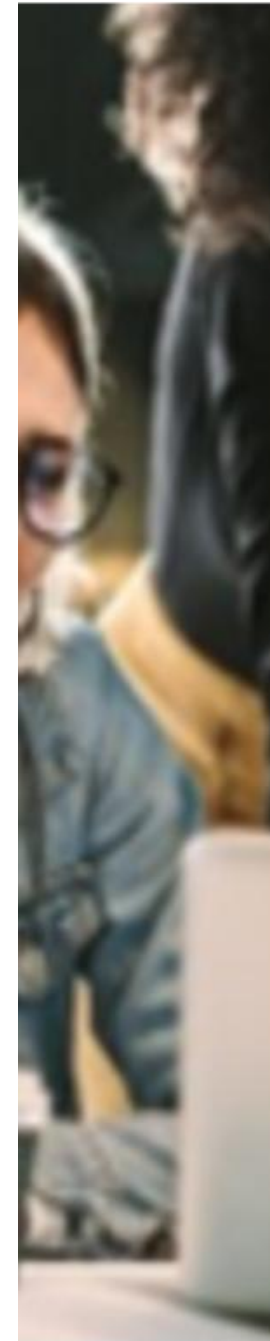
Federal Law

**Including
Family
Educational
Rights and
Privacy Act
(FERPA)**

COE Operational Definitions

“Educator” is any teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the GaPSC and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate.

- For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- **GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01 (2)(d)**



COE Operational Definitions

Student:

“Student” is anyone under the age of 18 OR a student enrolled in grades Pre-K to 12 in a public or private school.

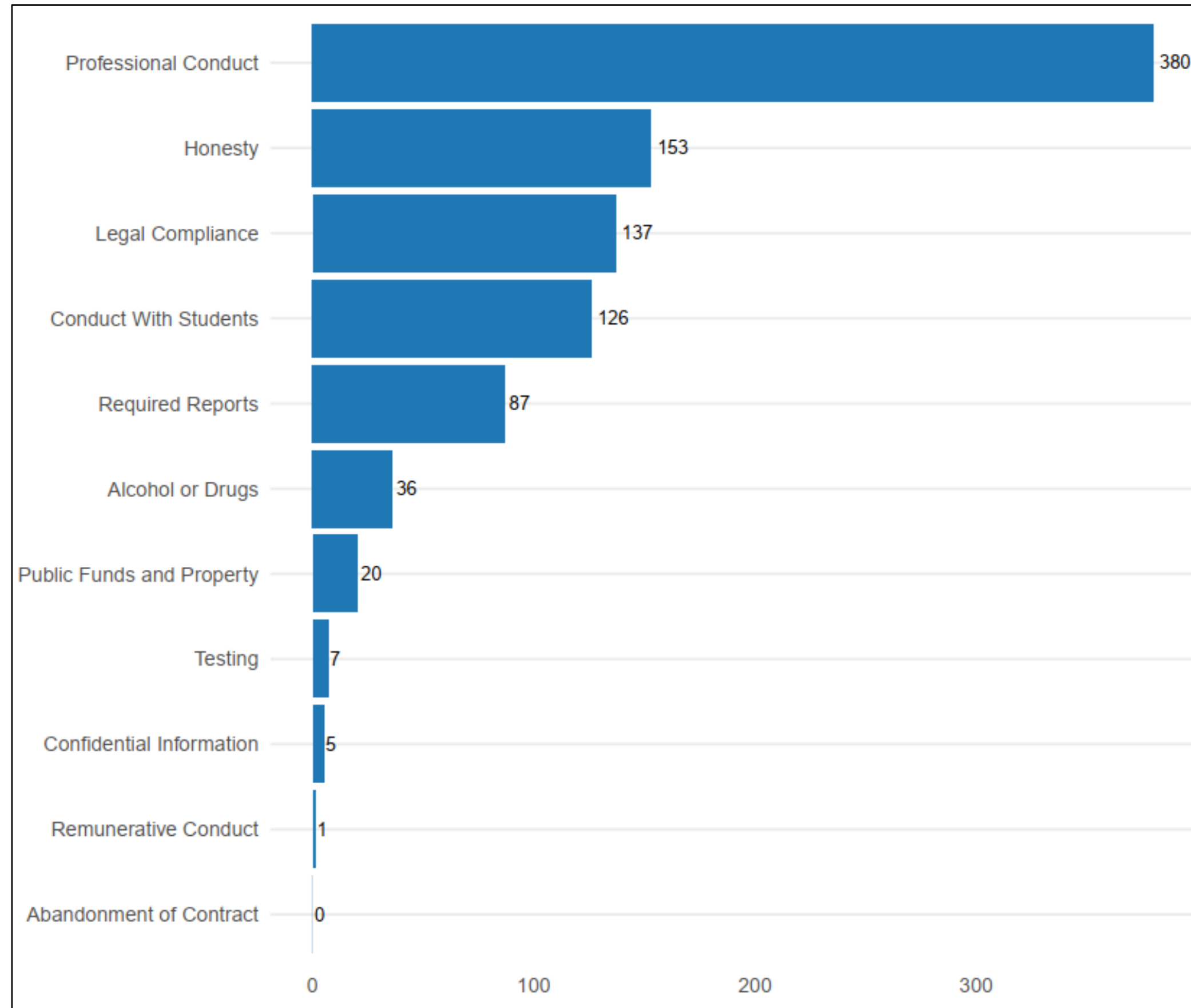
- For the purposes of the Code of Ethics, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.



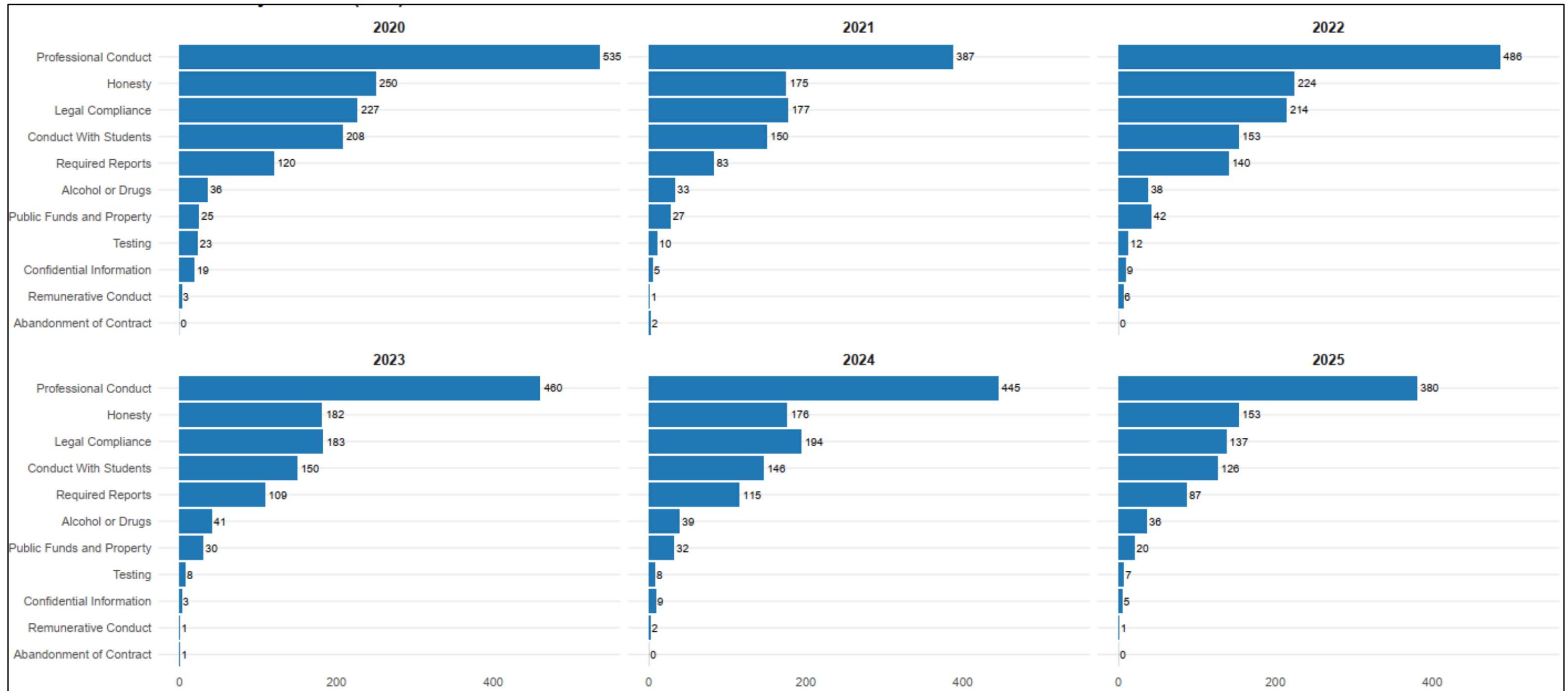


Ethics Data Snapshot

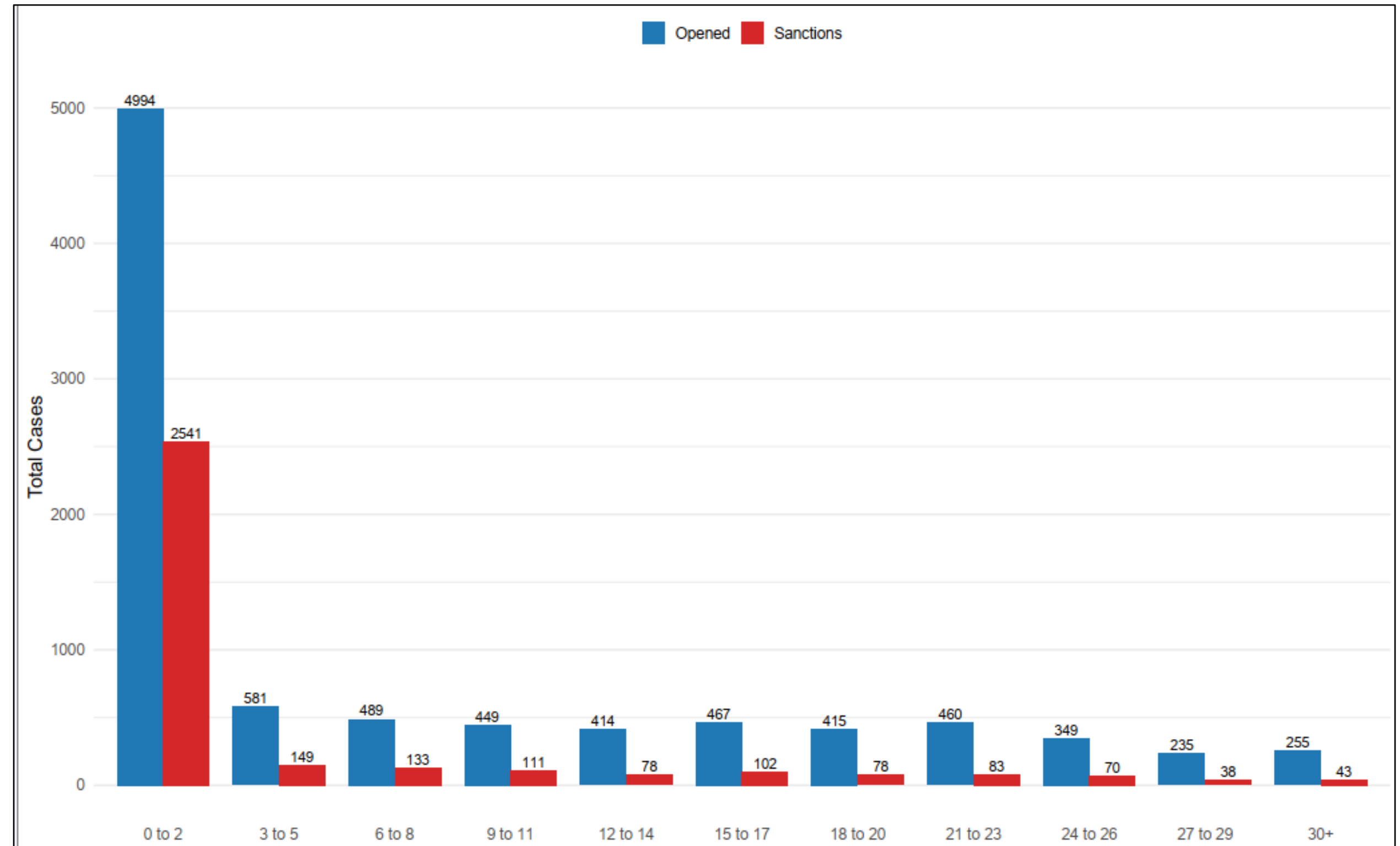
Sanctions by Standard 2025



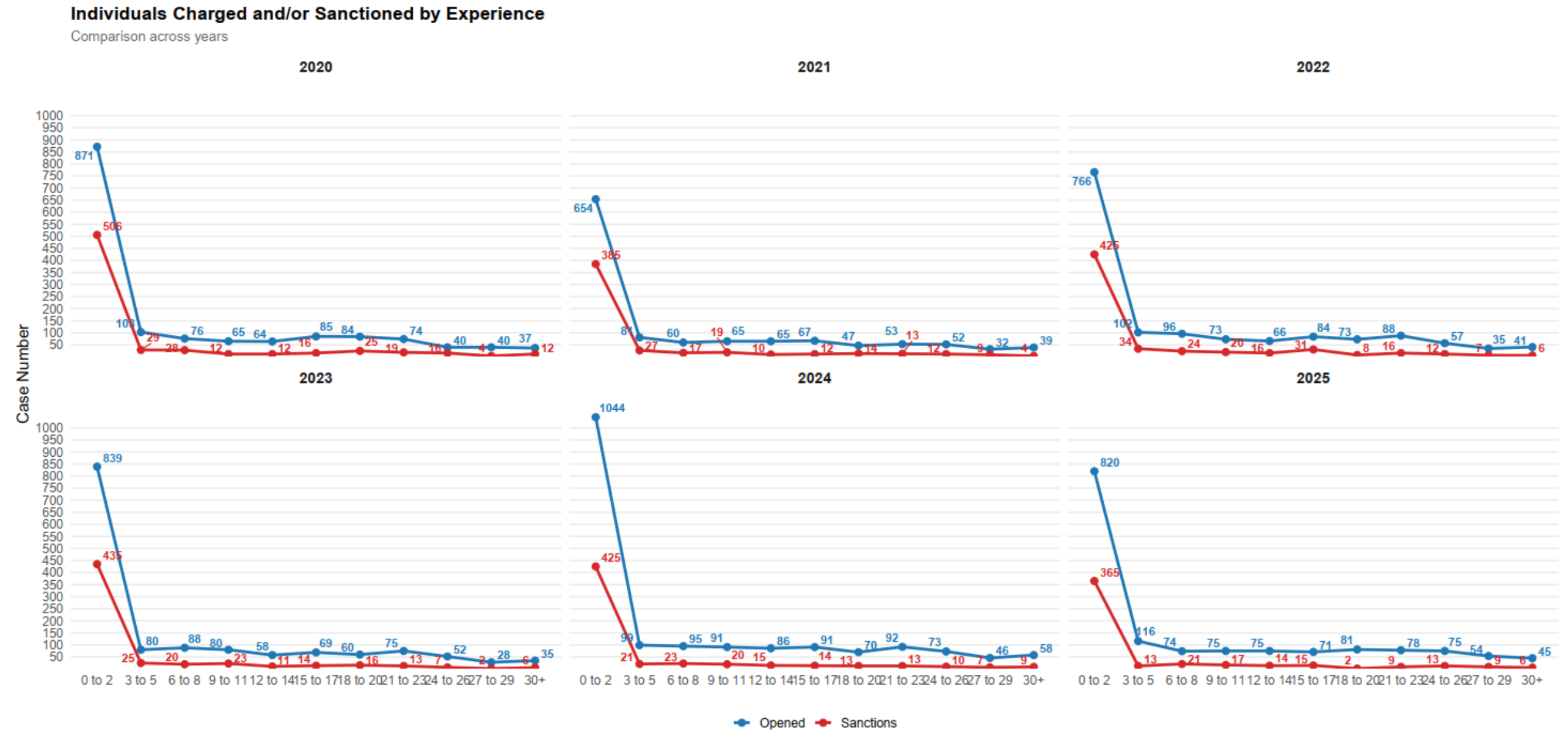
Sanctions by Standard 2020-2025



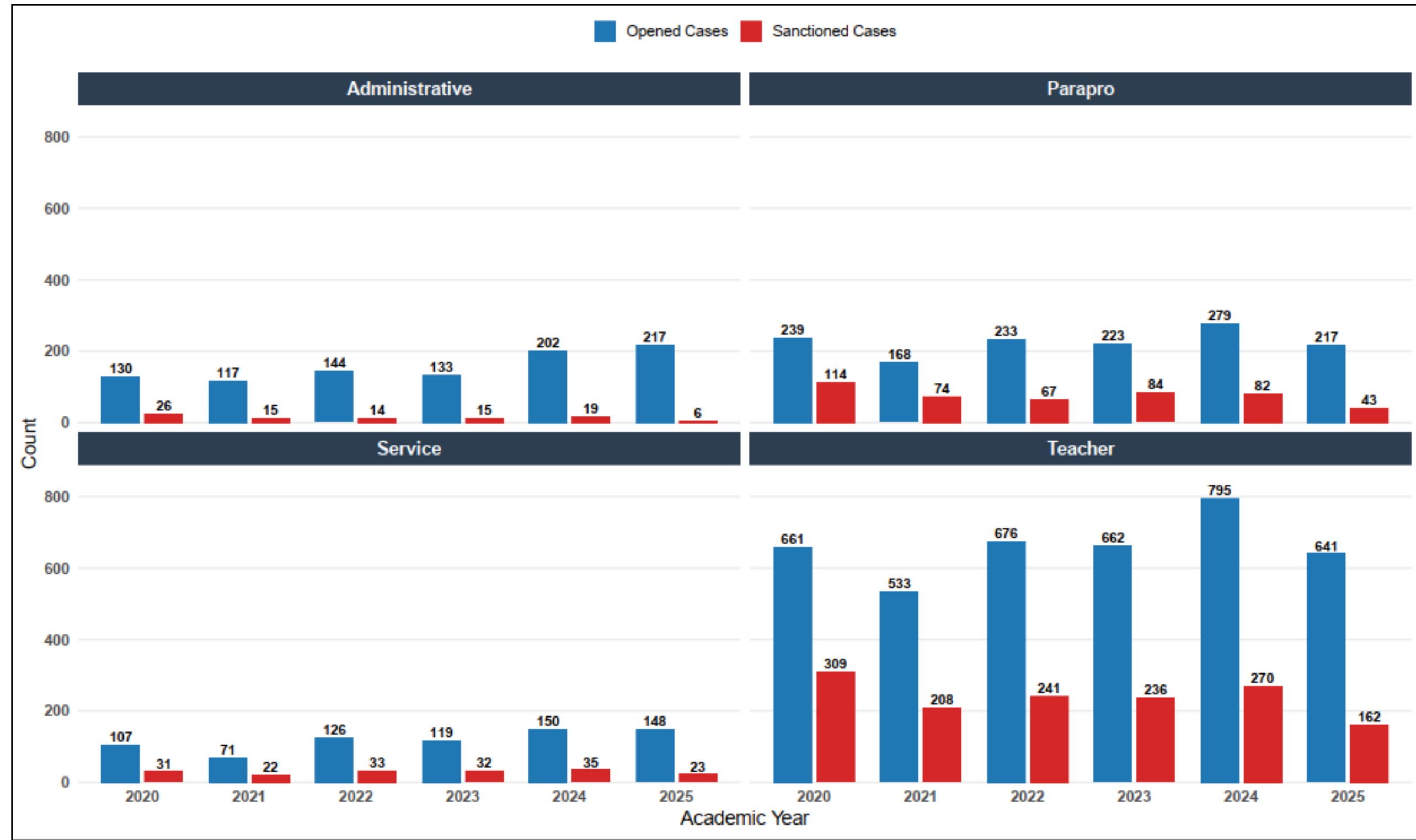
Cases Opened and/or Sanctioned by Experience (2020-2025)



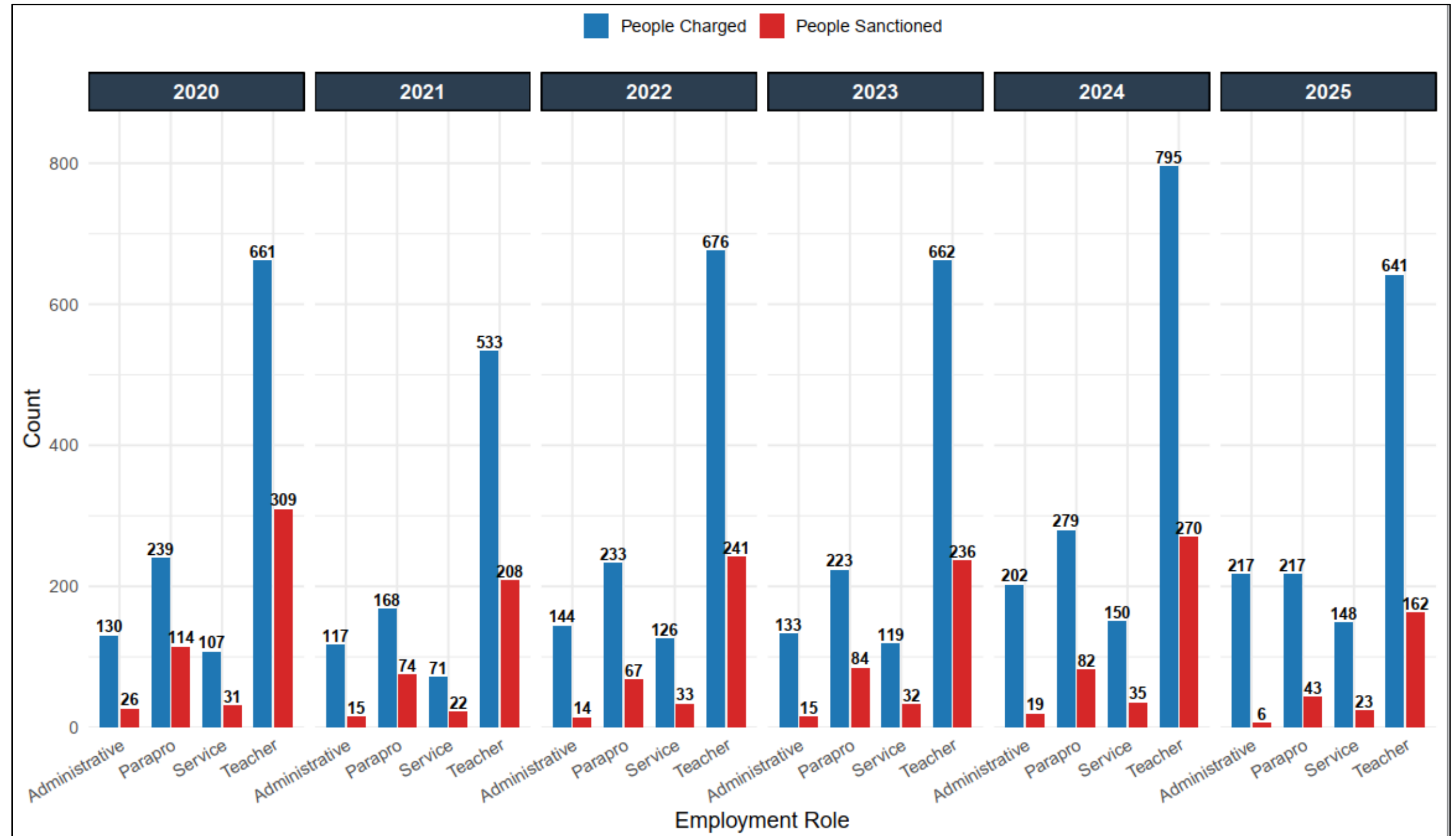
Cases Opened and/or Sanctioned by Experience (By Year)



Cases Opened and/or Sanctioned by Role



Cases Opened and/or Sanctioned by Employment Role (By Year)





Month/Year		Number of PIDs
	Jan-12	44
	Jan-13	42
	Jan-14	53
	Jan-15	61
	Jan-16	49
	Jan-17	78
	Jan-18	111
	Jan-19	51
	Jan-20	73
	Jan-21	97
	Jan-22	46
	Jan-23	49
	Jan-24	92
	Jan-25	100
	Jan -26	151

**Snapshot of
Complaints
Received
(Preliminary
Investigation
Determinations)
in January Across
the Years**

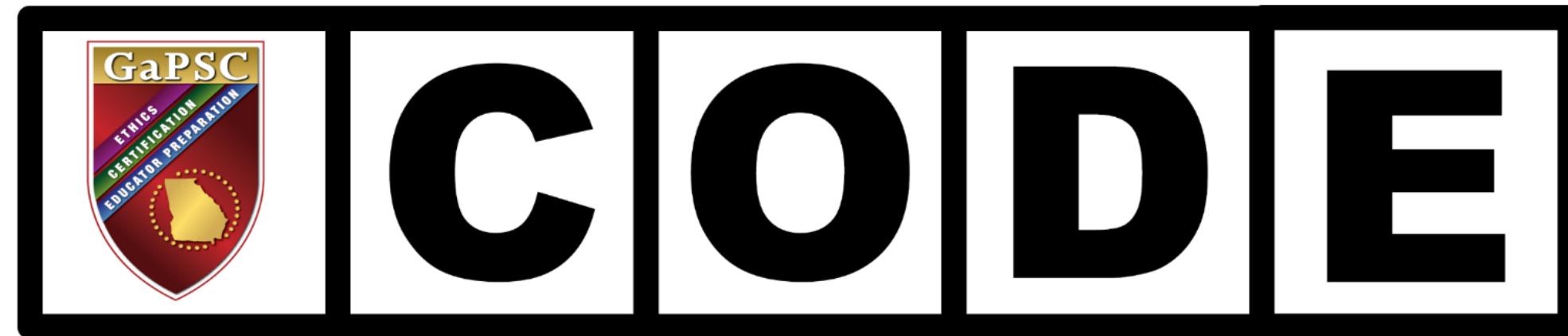
Complaints Received by Year



Let's Focus on Prevention



Know the



of Ethics for Educators

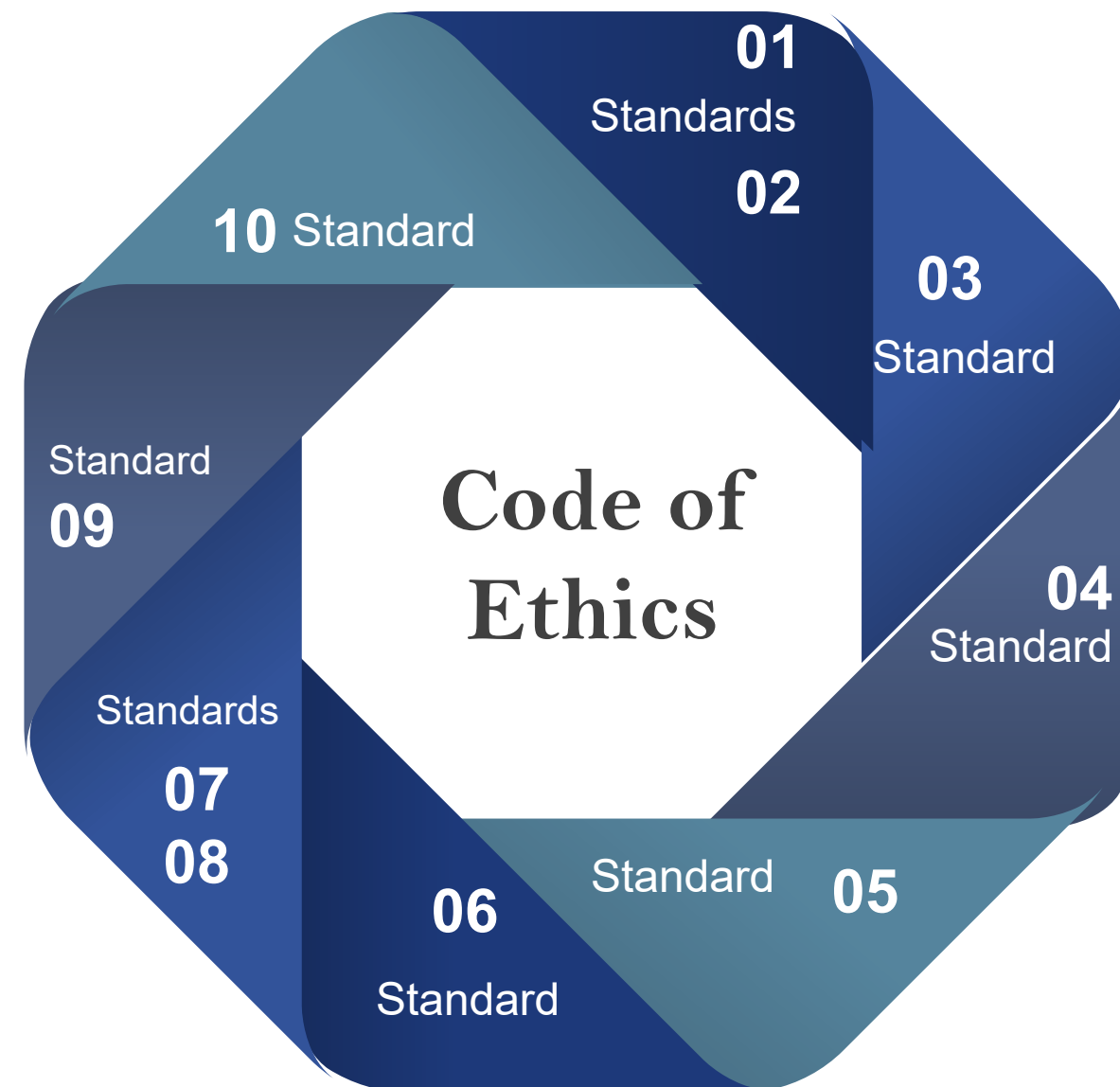
The Need



Why Focus on Avoiding Missteps?

- ❑ Great damage can be done to children, colleagues, schools, communities, and the profession by unethical acts of educators, which can be devastating.
- ❑ In Georgia, the Commission sanctions, suspends, or revokes the certificates of talented educators each month due to violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators.
- ❑ GaPSC receives about 150 complaints on Georgia certified educators each month. So far in 2026, we are seeing a 30% increase over last year.
- ❑ We believe these cases are preventable.
- ❑ GaPSC is highly committed to an ethical educator workforce, and this training is a part of our proactive approach to ethics education, outreach and prevention.

About the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators



Code of Ethics for Educators Standards



Standard 1: Legal Compliance

- Abide by all federal, state, and local laws and statutes.

Standard 2: Conduct With Students

- Maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

Standard 3: Drugs or Alcohol

- Refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice.

Standard 4: Honesty

- Exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.

Code of Ethics for Educators Standards



Standard 5: Public Funds & Property

- An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct

- Maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

Standard 7: Confidential Information

- Comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information.

Code of Ethics for Educators Standards



Standard 8: Required Reports

- Report a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report.

Standard 9: Professional Conduct

- Demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.

Standard 10: Testing

- Administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically.



Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning





**Georgia Professional
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Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of:

- ☐ Any felony.
- ☐ Any misdemeanor crime involving moral turpitude.
- ☐ Any criminal offense involving a controlled substance or marijuana.
- ☐ Any sexual offense specified in Code Section 16.
- ☐ Any law applicable to the profession.

VIOLATION

Standard 1: Common Violations

- ☐ Not disclosing minor charges on Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) in MyPSC Accounts, including shoplifting, bad checks, misdemeanor marijuana, etc.
- ☐ Not reporting convictions (any felony; any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; any drug charge) within 10 days. Anyone who holds professional licensing/certificate must disclose within 10 days. Not disclosing may be automatic revocation.

Standard 1: Takeaways

- Follow the law.
- Read all applications carefully and adhere to the application requirements.
- Anyone who holds an educator certification/license must disclose a controlled substance arrest/charge within 10 days - Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A § 16-13-.111). Failure to do so, may result in automatic revocation of certification/license.





Standard 1: Takeaways (continued)

- ❑ No matter how old an offense, attest to it when completing Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs), applications, etc. It is critical to answer YES appropriately as to if there has been a conviction. YES answers are investigated under Standard 1: Legal Compliance. Not answering PAQs accurately also violates Standard 4: Honesty.
- ❑ Conduct/ethics sanctions in another state must be self-reported to the GaPSC and/or disclosed on PAQs where appropriate.

Standard 1: Scenario

An educator was arrested for Theft by Shoplifting in 2020. He pled guilty and was sentenced to 12 months on probation. The educator failed to disclose the arrest on his initial application for certification in 2022.

This is a violation of Standard 1 for the conviction. It is also a violation of Standard 8 for failure to disclose the arrest to the GaPSC within 90 days.

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Standard 2: Conduct with Students

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 2: Conduct with Students

An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student;
or
7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

VIOLATION

Standard 2: Common Violations

- ☐ Physical discipline – putting hands on a student in an aggressive way;
- ☐ Inappropriate restraint – not following approved restraint measures;
- ☐ Verbal abuse depending on the degree – may be handled locally;
- ☐ Becoming too friendly with a student or group of students (treating students as peers).
- ☐ Having inappropriate conversations with peers where students can overhear.

Standard 2: Takeaways

- ❑ Be friendly, but not a friend.
- ❑ Respect physical and other boundaries.
- ❑ Choose appropriate settings and times for communication, avoiding direct electronic communications where possible.
- ❑ Use appropriate conduct and language when interacting with students on and off campus.
- ❑ Avoid social media pitfalls with students or about students.



Standard 2: Scenario

A K-2 special education teacher pinched an autistic student and improperly used a weighted blanket to restrain the student.



This is a violation of Standard 2. It is important to know and follow local school policies and guidelines regarding restraining and/or touching students.



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Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

*Standard 3:
Alcohol or Drugs*

An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages.
2. Being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system.

Alcohol or Drugs (continued)

For the purposes of this standard, an educator may be considered “under the influence” if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to:

- ☐ slurred speech,
- ☐ enlarged pupils,
- ☐ bloodshot eyes,
- ☐ general personality changes,
- ☐ lack of physical coordination,
- ☐ poor motor skills,
- ☐ memory problems,
- ☐ concentration problems, etc.

VIOLATION

Standard 3: Common Violations

- ☐ Consuming or using alcohol or drugs prior to going on campus, on campus, on school field trips at any time, or any other school-sponsored event or activity.
- ☐ Allowing students access to alcohol at any time, including in your own home.
- ☐ Drugs used legally in other states yet are still in the educator's system when in a Georgia school or at a school-sponsored event or activity.

VIOLATION

Common Violations (continued)

- ☐ Gifting wine on campus to other co-workers.
- ☐ Not disclosing minor charges on Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) including misdemeanor marijuana.
- ☐ Not reporting convictions (any felony; any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; any drug charge) within **90 days**.
- ☐ Anyone who holds a professional license/certificate must disclose drug convictions within **10 days**. Not disclosing may be automatic revocation.

Standard 3: Takeaways



- ☐ Even if you think you are not affected, do not use drugs or consume alcohol at school, on school grounds, or prior to or at any school or school-sponsored activity.
- ☐ Ensure no drugs or alcohol are in your possession, including in your automobile, on campus.
- ☐ Just as with any arrest, report any drug or alcohol arrest promptly.

Standard 3: Scenario

The educator goes hiking on the weekend and injures her knee. She returns to work on Monday, but is in a great deal of pain. A coworker, who recently had surgery and was prescribed hydrocodone for pain, offers one to the educator. She takes it.



This is a violation of Standard 3. Hydrocodone is a controlled substance; therefore, possessing or consuming it without it being legally prescribed to you is a violation.



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Standard 4: Honesty

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 4: Honesty

An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. reasons for absences or leaves;
5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; or
6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

VIOLATION

Standard 4: Common Violations

- ❑ Approximately 75% of Standard 4 violations center on not completing applications honestly.
 - Many Standard 1: Legal Compliance violations regarding Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) are also Standard 4 violations due to dishonesty.
- ❑ Falsifying Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documents, such as documenting a meeting that was not held, falsifying signatures, backdating meeting dates, etc.
- ❑ Witness Tampering and suborning false testimony.

Standard 4: Takeaways



- ☐ Honesty is the best policy.
- ☐ Pay attention to your MyPSC account when submitting applications and answer Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) honestly and appropriately. Do not hide prior offenses.
- ☐ Do not falsify records, including grades, sick/personal leave, IEP documents, etc.
- ☐ Disclose any unsatisfactory performance evaluations.
- ☐ Respond to GaPSC requests.

Standard 4: Scenario

The educator signed Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documents for a meeting that did not take place. She asked her paraprofessional to sign she was present at the meeting.



Falsifying records is a violation of Standard 4: Honesty.



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Standard 5: Public Funds and Property

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property

An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

VIOLATION

Standard 5: Common Violations

- ☐ Improper use of school system property (violation of acceptable use policy). Ex. Watching a movie while at work.
- ☐ Stealing weight room equipment; pawning musical instruments.
- ☐ Co-mingling of funds; inappropriate handling of fundraiser fees, student activity funds, and athletic fees.
- ☐ Collecting funds but not using receipt books; using personal cash apps.
- ☐ Use of school email, etc. to sell for personal benefit or promote political candidates or political issues.

Standard 5: Takeaways



- ☐ When handling money, make sure to receipt it; know your school's financial guidelines.
- ☐ Do not mix funds; one cannot reimburse later for monies taken and deposited.
- ☐ Understand and follow local school policy regarding use of a school/organization item, equipment, vehicles, kitchens, athletics facilities, etc.
- ☐ School policy can determine if the use is a violation, such as if permission was granted for use.

Standard 5: Scenario

The educator conducted a candy sale fundraiser for 7th grade student activities using a personal account with the vendor and a personal credit card for payment. She failed to properly record sales or deposit funds per the school's policy. The educator's account with the vendor became delinquent, and the school was notified. The educator stated she had not received training in the school's fundraising procedures.

The co-mingling of funds is a Standard 5 violation. Ask for training if needed.



**Georgia Professional
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Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct

An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

*Standard 6:
Remunerative
Conduct*

**Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to
(continued):**

3. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involve students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association (GHSA).

VIOLATION

Standard 6: Common Violations

- ☐ Getting paid for two or more jobs during school time.
- ☐ Conducting personal business for profit during school hours.
- ☐ Not getting permission to provide additional services, such as coaching or tutoring, to students for payment.

Standard 6: Takeaways



- ☐ Check and abide by school policy regarding accepting payment, gifts, etc.
- ☐ Avoid the potential perception of favoritism and/or inappropriate relationships that may result by providing services to only a few.
- ☐ Obtain approval from the appropriate persons if you are coaching, etc., students in your own system and from whom you receive normal compensation.

Standard 6: Scenario

The educator ran a business selling jewelry and other type products. She displayed her products in the faculty workroom. The principal instructed the educator to remove the items and not sell them during school hours. The display was removed, but the paraprofessional continued to sell to fellow employees and to students.



This is a violation of Standard 6 as the educator solicited school personnel to purchase items to financially benefit the educator and was not approved to do so by the board of education/governing board or authorized designee.



**Georgia Professional
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Standard 7: Confidential Information

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 7: Confidential Information

An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;

*Standard 7:
Confidential
Information*

**Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to
(continued):**

3. Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

Examples of Confidential Information:

- ☐ Annual performance evaluation records of school personnel;
- ☐ Health services provided to insured;
- ☐ Individual student performance data, information and reports;
- ☐ School records of students with disabilities; or
- ☐ A student's education record.

VIOLATION

Standard 7: Common Violations

- ☐ Sharing confidential information on social media platforms.
- ☐ Sharing information outside appropriate settings and with appropriate personnel.
- ☐ Sharing confidential information with appropriate personnel but within the hearing of others.
- ☐ Using personal email to send/receive a student's education record(s).

Standard 7: Takeaways



- ☐ Keep confidential information within secure, school platforms.
- ☐ Ensure school records and school files are protected.
- ☐ Respect the information and data of your students.
- ☐ Avoid social media posts of students and the classroom.
- ☐ Be aware of others who may be able to overhear confidential information.

Standard 7: Takeaways (continued)



- ❑ Student information, including and especially IEP information, is to be protected and only discussed with appropriate individuals when needed and in a private setting.
- ❑ Any information located in a student's school file should be protected and never disclosed to anyone in public.

Standard 7: Scenario



An educator participates in a TikTok video where the adults are singing and dancing to a song that makes fun of the behaviors of some of their students. The students are mentioned by name. A parent brings the video to the principal's attention.

*Yes, this **is** a Standard 7 violation.*



**Georgia Professional
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Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning

Standard 8:

Required Reports

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 8: Required Reports

An educator shall file with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Failure to report to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission.

*Standard 8:
Required Reports*

**Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to
(continued):**

2. Failure to make a required report of a an alleged or proven violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and

*Standard 8:
Required Reports*

**Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to
(continued):**

3. Failure to make a required report of any alleged or proven violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

VIOLATION

Standard 8: Common Violations

- ☐ Not reporting abuse or suspected abuse to appropriate personnel and within specified timelines.
- ☐ Not reporting suspected violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics and within specified timelines.
- ☐ Not disclosing past and current convictions and within specified timelines.

Standard 8: Takeaways



- ❑ It is important to report abuse or suspected abuse to appropriate personnel within specified timelines. The Mandated Reporter Law (O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5) requires reporting of actual or suspected student abuse within 24 hours to the Local Education Agency (LEA), Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and/or the District Attorney's Office.
- ❑ It is important to report suspected violations to the Georgia Code of Ethics within specified timelines.
- ❑ It is important to disclose past and current convictions within specified timelines.

Standard 8: Scenario



A coach overheard a conversation during gym class between two students. One student shared she was afraid to go home as her uncle, who lived with her family, had sexually assaulted her. She did not want to tell her parents.

The coach had doubts about what he heard and waited three days to report the conversation to his supervisor.

*The State Mandated Reporter Law requires **suspected** or **actual** sexual abuse must be reported promptly and no later than within 24 hours.*



**Georgia Professional
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Standard 9: Professional Conduct

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 9: Professional Conduct

An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- ☐ a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract;
- ☐ any 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; or failure to supervise a student(s).

VIOLATION

Standard 9: Common Violations

- ☐ Contract breaches and leaving without notice.
- ☐ Disrespecting students.
- ☐ Any conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of the student.
- ☐ Failure to supervise students.

Standard 9: Takeaways



- ☐ Be a professional. Observe personal and professional boundaries.
- ☐ Supervise students appropriately and obtain supervisory approval when needed.
- ☐ Be aware of those following you on social media and those you follow. Be aware others can post comments on your page that can speak to how others perceive you.
- ☐ Show respect for colleagues and students.
- ☐ Use social media appropriately, including showing respect for colleagues and students.
- ☐ Honor your contractual obligations.

Standard 9: Scenario

While conducting a virtual class, a high school teacher engaged in a verbal domestic dispute with his wife. His microphone and camera remained on during the incident, and the students could see and hear the argument and the profanity used. A student recorded the altercation and sent it to many more students.



This is a violation of Standard 9, even though the educator may not have realized the students could see and hear the incident.



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Standard 10: Testing

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

Standard 10: Testing

An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically.

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Committing any act that breaches test security;
and
2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

VIOLATION

Standard 10: Common Violations

- ☐ Intentional errors in the testing process.
- ☐ Blatant cheating to influence the outcome.
- ☐ Paraphrasing or prompting students' responses.

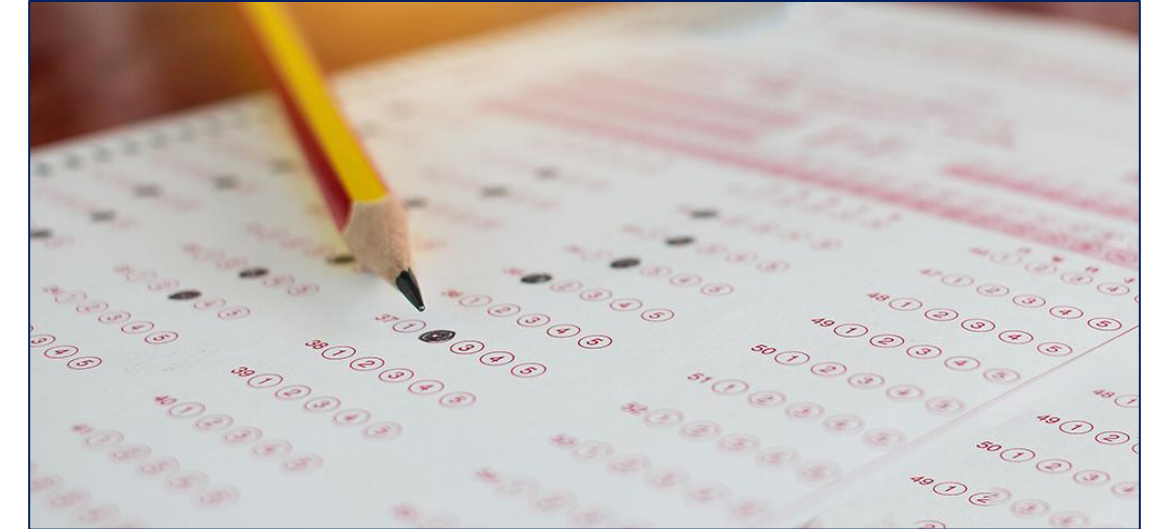
Standard 10: Takeaways



- ☐ Know testing procedures and policies; follow protocols.
- ☐ Acknowledge any mistakes; do not hide them.
- ☐ Establish an environment conducive to student learning and test score improvement.
- ☐ Report testing irregularities or suspicion of testing irregularities.
- ☐ Know that test security is paramount.

Standard 10: Scenario

While the Georgia Milestone Assessment is being administered, a student becomes upset because he does not know how to complete a multiplication problem.



In an effort to keep the student calm, the educator tells the student to use repeated addition if he does not know how to multiply. The educator also writes examples of repeated addition on the student's scratch paper.

This is a Standard 10 violation. This action compromises the integrity of the test.



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Scenarios and Discussion



Scenario 1

A teacher attends lunch off campus, consumes several alcoholic drinks, and returns to teach while impaired. The paraprofessional in the classroom smells the alcohol when talking to the teacher, but does not say anything for fear of getting the teacher in trouble. The principal later passes the teacher in the hall and notices the odor of alcohol as the teacher passes by. When questioned, the teacher falsely denies drinking. Which COE Standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs

Standard 4: Honesty

Standard 8: Required Reports

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 2

A high school English teacher frequently arrives late to work and leaves the classroom unattended. The teacher also collects funds for school swag using a personal cash app and uses the funds to pay a personal credit card bill, intending to pay it back later. The same educator provides private tutoring sessions to students for a fee at the school using school supplies without supervisor approval. Which COE Standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 3

The educator becomes angry at a student who was disrupting the class and forcefully grabs a student by both arms, leaving visible bruises, while cursing at the student. During the course of the investigation, it was determined the educator had a history of inappropriate physical contact with students in another state, which the educator did not earlier disclose. Which COE Standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

Standard 2: Conduct with Students

Standard 4: Honesty

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 4

The head football coach knows that his star quarterback is academically ineligible under district policy. The player is also recovering from a concussion but insists he feels fine. With a region championship on the line, the coach pressures the athletic trainer to clear the athlete and asks a teacher to "reconsider" a failing grade so the player can compete. The coach tells everyone involved that the team's success depends on keeping quiet. Which COE standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

Standard 4: Honesty

Standard 8: Required Reports

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 5

A band director partners with a music company, a school vendor, that pays private commissions on every instrument sold. The band director strongly encourages students to purchase the instruments from the company, takes orders at school, and uses the school computer to keep track of the sales. The educator also likes to workout and borrows equipment purchased by the Booster Club for personal use at home. Which COE standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 2: Conduct with Students

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 6

A middle school teacher regularly communicates with students through a personal social media account and late-night text messages. One student begins sharing personal struggles, and the teacher tells the student not to involve parents or counselors because "our conversations are just between us." The teacher later shares details about the student's family situation and falling grades with the front office staff. Which COE Standards are violated?

Standards Violated

Standard 2: Conduct with Students

Standard 7: Confidential Information

Standard 10: Professional Conduct



Scenario 7

A high school teacher, who also handles the yearbook, accepts a position in another district and leaves immediately without notifying the principal. Academic records are incomplete, yearbook supplies are missing, and student emergency contact information is left unsecured in an unlocked office.

Standards Violated:

Standard 7: Confidential Information

Standard 9: Professional Conduct

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property



Scenario 8

A coach becomes angry at a player and forcefully grabs a student by both arms, slings the player several feet, and leaves visible bruises, while cursing at the player. During the course of the investigation, it was determined the coach had a history of inappropriate physical contact with students in another state, which the educator did not earlier disclose. Which COE standards are violated?

Standards Violated:

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

Standard 2: Conduct with Students

Standard 4: Honesty

Standard 9: Professional Conduct



Scenario 9

After winning a drama competition, an educator hosts a celebration at a family cabin. Several students who competed in the competition attend without school approval or parental supervision. During the evening, the educator consumes alcohol with some of the seniors and ignores underage drinking by students. When a colleague expresses concern, the educator tells the colleague that reporting the incident would "destroy the program." Which COE Standards are violated?

Standards Violated

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs

Standard 9: Required Reports

Standard 10: Professional Conduct



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Complaints and Sanctions

Filing Complaints



- Any Georgia citizen can file an ethics complaint as long as it is signed. The General Complaint Form can be found here:
https://www.gapsc.com/Ethics/Downloads/General%20Complaint%20Form_1-17-23.pdf
- Know the protocol of the school district for reporting alleged violations, which may be to report the allegation to your immediate supervisor.
- Submit in writing, even if a verbal report was made to the employer.
- Non-employees should contact the district superintendent's office if applicable.

Potential Sanctions

- Warning
- Reprimand
- Suspension-1 day to 3 years
- Revocation
- Denial
- Sanctions are permanent and remain on the certificate
- Suspensions and higher are reported to national database





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Ethical Considerations in the Appropriate Use of AI by Educators





AI Ethical Guidance Principles

Principle #1:

When AI tools are used in the classroom, educators and/or staff have an obligation to ensure they are being used **responsibly** and **ethically**.

Principle #2:

Administrators, educators, and staff have a responsibility to **model** and **teach** the ethical, responsible use of AI and to **mitigate the risk** of misuse that undermines academic integrity or threatens the well-being of students and staff.

Principle #3:

When using AI, educators, administrators, and staff have a responsibility to **proactively protect** the personally identifiable information entrusted to them.



AI Ethical Guidance Principles

Principle #4:

Administrators, educators, and staff should apply professional practice in evaluating, selecting, and using AI tools, aligned with all relevant **laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines.**

Principle #5:

Educators, administrators, and staff have a responsibility to clearly and transparently **communicate** the use of AI in instructional and administrative practices.

Principle #6:

Educators, administrators, and staff have a shared responsibility to use best practices to understand and help **mitigate bias** in AI tools and potential results.



AI Ethical Guidance Principles

Principle #7:

Due to the rapid pace of AI development, educators, administrators, and school staff have a responsibility to **stay informed** about the capabilities, risks, and ethical considerations of AI, and to effectively communicate any concerns.



Principle #1 Scenario

A second-grade teacher uses a district-approved AI tool to generate daily math assessments. Over time, the teacher stops reviewing the questions and relies entirely on the AI to determine mastery and intervention needs. Several students are placed into intervention groups based solely on AI-generated scores.

Discussion:

1. How at what point does efficiency cross into unethical delegation of professional responsibility?
2. How does this scenario challenge GaPSC's expectation that humans remain responsible for AI output?
3. What safeguards should exist before AI data influences instructional placement?
4. How could this situation escalate into a formal ethics concern?



Principle #2 Scenario

A teacher encourages students to use AI to draft argumentative essays but provides no instruction on acceptable use, citation, or academic integrity. Later, the teacher penalizes students for plagiarism when AI-generated language appears in their work.

Discussion Questions:

1. What ethical responsibilities do educators have when directing students to use AI?
2. Is it fair to discipline students for misuse when expectations were unclear?
3. How does this scenario relate to modeling ethical behavior under GaPSC guidance?
4. What preventative steps should have been taken?



Principle #3 Scenario

An assistant principal uploads named student behavior logs, attendance data, and parent communications into an AI tool to identify discipline trends. The tool is not district-approved, and no parental notification occurs.

Discussion

1. What ethical risks arise from sharing student data with unapproved AI platforms?
2. How does this scenario intersect with FERPA and district data policies?
3. What obligations does the administrator have to protect student trust?
4. How could this situation trigger a formal GaPSC investigation?



Principle #4 Scenario

A teacher uses AI-generated summaries of historical events without reviewing them for accuracy or bias. The summaries minimize marginalized perspectives and contain factual errors that parents later challenge.

Discussion

1. When does reliance on AI undermine professional expertise?
2. How should educators evaluate AI output before classroom use?
3. What harm can result when biased or inaccurate content is presented as authoritative?
4. How does this scenario reflect GaPSC's expectation of professional judgment?



Principle #5 Scenario

A principal authorizes the use of AI to generate teacher observation summaries and improvement plans. Teachers are not informed that AI is involved in the evaluation process.

Discussion

1. Why is transparency essential when AI is used in evaluative contexts?
2. How could undisclosed AI use erode trust between educators and administrators?
3. What communication should have occurred before implementing this practice?
4. How might this scenario affect morale and professional relationships?



Principle #6 Scenario

A teacher uses an AI career-planning tool that consistently recommends lower-wage career pathways for some of her students. The teacher notices the pattern but continues using the tool without raising concerns.

Discussion

1. What ethical obligation do educators have to intervene when AI outputs appear biased?
2. How could continued use of this tool harm students' future opportunities?
3. What steps should be taken when AI tools appear biased?
4. How does this scenario relate to advocacy for students under the Code of Ethics?



Principle #7 Scenario

A district leader deploys multiple AI tools for instructional and administrative use but provides no professional development or reporting process for concerns. Teachers express confusion but are told to “learn as they go.”

Discussion:

1. What responsibilities do leaders have to ensure ethical AI implementation?
2. How does lack of training increase the risk of ethical violations system-wide?
3. What reporting structures should be in place under GaPSC guidance?
4. How could this scenario expose the district and educators to ethical risk?



Reminders and Resources

Resources

- ❑ The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (505-6-.01)
- ❑ The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators PowerPoint (2026-27)
- ❑ Separate Videos on each of the ten Code of Ethics standards
- ❑ Suggested Guidelines for Ethical Use of Social Media and Ethical Remote Learning
- ❑ Ethical Considerations in the Appropriate Use of AI for Educators
 - ❑ Guidance
 - ❑ Podcast Series

Available at: https://www.gapsc.com/Ethics/Ethics_Resources.aspx



Ethical Considerations in the Appropriate Use of AI by Educators



Contact Information



<https://www.gapsc.com>

GaPSC's website is an important source of information.

If additional assistance is needed, contact information is available at www.gapsc.com/ethics/contact or email ethics@gapsc.com