

AN EXAMINATION OF STANDARD VIOLATIONS FROM 2002 TO 2004
OF THE GEORGIA CODE OF ETHICS

by

HOPE LA'MONICA FORDHAM

(Under the Direction of William Swan)

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study two part study were to (1) examine the standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that have led to educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004; and (2) to develop and administer a survey to assess if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have 100 percent knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately.

Participants for part I of this study were all the educators from 2002-2004 who had their educator certificate revoked or suspended as a result of standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics. There was a total of 547 standard violations participants that resulted in educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004. The data were obtained from the final decision documents detailing the standard violations by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) Investigators. From each document, standard violated, final decisions (revocation/suspension), date of the final decision, and educator gender were the data obtained.

The population for part II was composed of educators from various schools within six school districts belonging to the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The data chosen for analysis for part two of this research study was collected from participant responses to the Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE). Two-hundred thirty surveys were distributed and 171 surveys were completed and return, equaling a 74.3% return rate. The Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE) consisted of a demographics section and 24 statements which assessed the knowledge of the respondents on standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics.

The findings for Part I of the study indicated the following: (1) There were statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates for gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision; and (2) There were statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the frequency of violations that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates between each of the 10 standards and gender, final decision. The findings for Part II of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females.

INDEX WORDS: Code of Ethics, Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Educator
Complaint Processes

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents, Ann and Mose Fordham, Sr., you are my strength. At an early age you instilled in me “That All Things Are Possible Through God, You Must Believe”. And you provided me with living examples of how hard work and perseverance will pay in the end. Granddaddy, you were with me when I began this dissertation and I am saddened that you are not here to see me finish it. But I know you are looking down from above. I did it!

To my parents, Ann and Willie Williams, my sister and brother, Cicely and Eric Williams, thank you for your loving support and words of encouragement.

To my son, Demetrios Fordham, you are my inspiration. It is because of you that I continue to make strides and achieve goals. I want you to know that it is possible to achieve anything if you work hard, put God first and believe. I love you, my son.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recent incidents of documented teacher misbehavior across the country have received increased publicity from the news media. These incidents range from inappropriate classroom management to sexual misconduct. Incidents of inappropriate classroom management have made the headlines of Florida and Arkansas newspapers. For example, “Ethics in the spotlight; When teachers stand accused” read the headline of the St. Petersburg Times in Florida, after two teachers at an elementary school in Tampa were caught helping third-graders cheat on achievement tests (Ave, 2004). “Beheading video seen by students; Teacher suspended for five days” was the headline of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in Little Rock. A high school teacher was suspended without pay for five days because he showed an internet video of the beheading of 26 year old Nicholas Bergs, a U. S. civilian in Iraq (Rogers, 2004).

National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) News, the Associated Press (AP), and Chicago newspapers have published headlines on teacher sexual misconduct incidents. “Sexual misconduct between educators and students” was the headline of an NBC News broadcast on July 1, 2004. According to the broadcast, a middle school teacher in Florida had repeated sexual encounters with one of her 14 year old male students (Sanders, 2004). In Englewood, New Jersey, a male administrator fondled the groin and inner thigh of a 16 year old boy in his school office on three or four different occasions, the headlines read “School Administrator charged with fondling male student” (The Associated Press, 2004). The headline for a Chicago-Sun Time issue on April 21, 2004

was “Student: Teacher asked for oral sex”; in this incident a high-school chorus teacher sexually abused a student in 2002 and bragged to students in his classes that the girl was his woman (Esposito, 2004).

Incidents of unprofessional conduct have made the headlines of Georgia newspapers. For example, “Teachers ethics board eyes reprimands; 10 who bought fake degrees face disciplinary action” in Georgia--ten educators purchased false degrees from St. Regis University, eight of those were doctoral degrees (Dodd, 2004). Another incident involved a computer technology coordinator who stored pornography on his computer station at work; the headline for this incident read, “Porn allegations surround school technician, Gwinnett worker may lose license” (Dodd, 2003).

The behaviors of these educators suggest that they may not be aware of the consequences of their behavior. In Georgia, certified public school educators have to abide by the Georgia Code of Ethics or risk having their certificate suspended or revoked.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have 100 percent knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately to specific situations. The Educator Ethics Division (EED) of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) meets once a month with the PSC Board. At those monthly meetings, the EED reports the number of new educator complaints regarding violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics received since the previous meeting. For the months of January to December of 2002, there were 891 new complaints about educators, a decrease of 45 compared to the 846 new complaints received for January to December of 2003 but an increase of 117 compared to the 963 new educator complaints

received for January to December of 2004 (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2002; 2003; 2004). Additional professional development on the Code may reduce the increasing numbers of educator complaints to the Educator Ethics Division of the Professional Standards Commission.

Statement of the Purposes

The purposes of this two part study were to: (1) examine the standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that have led to educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004; and (2) to develop and administer a survey to assess if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have 100 percent knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately to specific situations.

In Part I of the study, analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences across gender and final decisions (revocation/suspension) and to develop a survey. Part II of the study was to administer a survey instrument to educators in selected systems to assess educators' knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics. The results of the survey may indicate the potential need for additional training on it.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. Are there statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates for gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision?

2. Are there statistically significant differences in the frequency of violations from 2002 to 2004 that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates between each of the 10 standards and gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision?
3. Are there statistically significant differences between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses that were addressed by this study were as follows:

H_{R1}

There will be statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates for gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision.

H_{R2}

There will be statistically significant differences in the frequency of violations from 2002 to 2004 that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates between each of the 10 standards and gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision.

H_{R3}

There will be a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females.

Definition of Terms

This section is composed of definitions of terms that are important to this study. These definitions are as follows:

Code of Ethics for Educators- defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Certificate- refer to any teaching, service, or Leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Complaint- any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Educator- a teacher, school, or school system administrator, or other education personnel who held a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Georgia Professional Standards Commission- responsible for the certification, preparation and conduct of certified, licensed or permitted personnel employed in the public schools of the State of Georgia. This Commission handles the investigation, advisement, monitoring and due process cases associated with educator discipline. It was created by the Georgia General Assembly as of July 1, 1991.

Respondent- an educator who has been accused of breaching one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators.

Revocation- the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Suspension- the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission (O.C.G.A. 505-6.01).

Limitations

This study had the following limitation: The generalizability of the results is limited to Middle Georgia educators because that was the sample studied.

Justification for the Study

Sadler's (2002) research study "identified and analyzed Georgia and Federal legislation, regulations, and judicial decisions that directly related to the legal rights and responsibilities of Georgia public school educators" (p.1). Sadler (2002) described the Georgia Code of Ethics "as a code that defines the professional behavior of educators, and acts as a guide to ethical conduct" (p. 118). Sadler (2002) recommended "that local boards of education provide inservice for all employees regarding their legal rights" (p. 121). It was the researcher's intent to advance this recommendation by developing a survey to assist local school systems in determining the need for continued professional learning courses on the Georgia Code of Ethics as well as provide a foundation of information from which further studies can be conducted.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided an introduction, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose which includes the research questions, research hypotheses, definitions of terms, limitations, justification, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 describes the review of literature related to the Code of Ethics. The review of related literature includes a restatement of the purpose, review of related studies and the history of codes of ethics, definitions of the different types of codes,

codes of ethics of other states, an examination of the Georgia Code of Ethics, descriptions of the Professional Standards Commission, descriptions of the Educator Complaint processes, and examples of standards violations. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures that were used to complete the study. Chapter 4 contains the findings from descriptive and inferential statistical analyses conducted on the data from standards violations from 2002 to 2004 and the survey. Chapter 5 provides the conclusions' and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purposes of this two part study were to: (1) examine the standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics (GCE) that have led to educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004; and (2) to develop and administer a survey to assess if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have adequate knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately to specific situations. This chapter reviews the literature related to the Georgia Code of Ethics. It is organized into the following sections: Related Research Studies, Code of Ethics, History of the Georgia Code of Ethics Professional Standards Commission, Educator Complaint Processes, and Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics.

Related Research Studies

A review of the literature revealed several studies related to the Georgia Code of Ethics. Joyner's (1999) research study assessed Georgia educators' knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics adopted in 1994 and their ability to apply it to case scenarios. The data for her research study was obtained from two researcher developed instruments: Survey of Georgia Educators and Survey of Georgia's Teacher Preparation Institutions. The Survey of Georgia Educators was designed to assess Georgia educators' knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics. Joyner (1999) grouped the participants who completed the Survey of Georgia Educators by gender, educational background, place of employment or position, and number of years of experience in the education field. She obtained a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) when the educators' responses were

analyzed by gender. “Scores on the Survey of Georgia Educators indicated that female educators have a significantly higher level of knowledge and understanding of the Standards of Conduct for Georgia educators than do their male counterparts” (Joyner, 1999, p. 82).

Sadler’s (2002) research study identified and analyzed the Georgia Code of Ethics adopted in 1994 as Georgia legislation that related directly to the legal rights and responsibilities of Georgia public school educators. According to Sadler (2002) the Georgia Code of Ethics’ purpose was to define professional behavior, provide accountability, and act as a guide for ethical conduct for its educators. It is composed of three parts: canons, ethical considerations, and standards. However, only the standards are binding for employees. The standards explain what is prohibited and what is required in their employment. If violated, those standards can be grounds for suspension or dismissal.

Banter’s (2003) research study involved an examination of the codes of ethics for educators and enforcement of those codes for 23 states. One of the 23 states examined was Georgia. According to Banter (2003), the revised Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators adopted in October of 2002 contained ten standards; each standard represented conduct that was generally accepted by the education profession and was enforced by the Professional Standards Commission (p. 97). “Georgia was the only state to offer examples of unethical behavior or conduct for each standard stated in the code” (Banter, 2003, p.170).

Code of Ethics

Campbell (2001) defined a professional code of ethics or a statement of ethical standards as a reflection of principles embedded in our personal and professional being, our practice, and our culture of teaching and schooling. Maguire and Brandl (2002) described a code of ethics as a “blanket statement of values and beliefs that defines the organization or group” (p.10). Litwack (2003) described it as a professional code that has been “self imposed by members of a profession as an alternative to having regulations imposed by external bodies, such as legislatures or governments” (p. 34).

According to Campbell (2000), a code of ethics can be described as either beneficence or non-maleficence. Campbell (2000) described a code of ethics that was beneficence as one that was specific about “what one should do” and ethical principles were presented from a “positive/proactive/imperative perspective” (p. 210). Campbell described a non-maleficence code of ethics as pertaining to “what one should not do” and the ethical principles were presented from a “negative/prohibitive perspective” (p. 210).

Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

In August 1999, the Professional Standards Commission adopted a Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators (GAPSC, 2004). This code of ethics was a combination of beneficence and non-maleficence. It specified what one should do as well as what one should not do. It outlined the expected professional behavior of educators and provided descriptions of unethical behavior. It was composed of ten standards. Each standard addressed the expected ethical conduct and its unethical violations.

1. Criminal act. This standard states that an educator is expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws and statutes. A commission or conviction of a felony or

misdemeanor of moral turpitude are examples of the criminal acts that are considered to be unethical conduct violations (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

2. Abuse of students. This standard states that an educator both inside and outside of the classroom should always maintain a professional relationship with all students. Unethical conduct violations include, but are not limited to, engaging in any act of child abuse, whether it is physical and/or emotional; engaging in any act of unkindness to children or any act that places a child's life in jeopardy; engaging or soliciting a child for any unlawful sexual act; soliciting, encouraging, or consummating a written, verbal, or physical romantic or inappropriate relationship with a student (including dating a student); engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, sex, national origin, religion, or disability; furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

3. Alcohol or Drugs. During the course of professional practice in particular work, an educator should refrain from the use of alcohol, illegal, or unauthorized drugs. If an educator is on school property or at a school related event that involves students while under the influence of, possession of, uses, or consumes alcohol or illegal drugs, this action is an unethical conduct violation. Under this standard, a school related activity is any activity sponsored by the school or school system. Those activities include but are not limited to fieldtrips, booster club meetings, or parent teacher conferences (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

4. Misrepresentation or falsification. This standard requires that throughout the course of professional practice, educators should always demonstrate honesty and

integrity. Unethical conduct violations include, but are not limited to, falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic awards, and employment history when applying for employment and/or certification or when recommending an individual for employment, promotion or certification; falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting information regarding compliance reports submitted to federal, state, and other governmental agencies; falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel including improper administration of any standardized tests (changing test answers, copying or teaching identified test items, unauthorized reading of the test to students, etc.); falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting reasons for absences or leaves; and falsifying, deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

5. Public Funds and Property. This standard deals with the handling of public funds and property. A high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility should be used by educators when dealing with public funds and property. Examples of unethical conduct violations for this standard include, but are not limited to the misusing of public or school-related funds or property; failing to account for funds collected from students or parents; submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expense or for pay; and co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

6. Improper Remunerative Conduct. According to this standard, when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation from students, colleagues,

parents, patrons, or businesses, educators should maintain integrity. Examples of unethical conduct violations include the following: soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator in a private remunerative capacity; accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest; tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education or superintendent (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

7. Confidential Information. This standard involves the handling of confidential information. State and federal laws as well as local school board policies related to the confidentiality of student records, unless disclosure is required by law, should be complied with by an educator. If an educator shares confidential information about a student's academic or discipline record, personal confidences, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results, this conduct is considered to be an unethical violation (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

8. Abandonment of contract. This standard states that for the duration of a contract an educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency. Unethical conduct violations include but are not limited to abandoning the contract for professional services without the prior release from the contract by the employer and refusing to perform the services required by a contract (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

9. Failure to Make a Required Report. This standard states that an educator should file any report of a violation 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.

Unless the law or local procedures do not require an educator to report it sooner, the failure of an educator to make a required report as soon as possible, but no later than ninety (90) days from the date he or she became aware of the alleged infraction, is considered to be an unethical conduct violation of this standard (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

10. Professional Conduct. This standard recognizes professional standards of conduct that should be demonstrated by an educator. Unethical is any conduct that seriously damages an educator's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position or conduct that is detrimental to health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students (inappropriate language, physical altercations, inadequate supervision, inappropriate discipline, etc.) (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

Review of the Code of Ethics for Other States

In reviewing codes of ethics for other states, four states were chosen for review because like Georgia, they belong to both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the National Association of State Directors of Teachers Education and Certification (NASDTEC).

Florida. Since the late 1960's Florida has had a Code of Ethics but it was not until 1982 that the code was legally enforced. In 1982, the Code of Ethics for Florida was revised and the Principles of Professional Conduct were added. The Principles of Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida are based upon three obligations. Those three obligations are to the student, the public, and the educational profession itself. Any educator who violated any of the principles is subject to suspension, revocation, or other penalties that imposed by the Education Standards Commission(ESC).

The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida is beneficence. It is composed of three statements that specify what one should do. Those three statements are as follows: (a) The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship; (b) The educator's primary professional concern should always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential; (c) Awareness of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator should strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct (§6B-1.001).

North Carolina. The Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators was adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education on June 5, 1997. Its purpose is to define standards of professional conduct. The North Carolina code of ethics is beneficence. Its standards outline what educators should do. This code is composed of a preamble and three standards. The preamble provides a general description of the expected professional conduct of North Carolina educators. It contains statements such as, "The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship"(16 NCAC 6C.0601).

Each standard of this code provides specific descriptions of the expected professional conduct, what one should do. The three standards are as follows: (a) commitment to the students, (b) commitment to the school and school system, and (c) commitment to the profession. The standard of commitment to the students requires the educator to protect students, maintain a professional relationship with students, evaluate

and discipline students fairly, and maintain confidential information about students. In the standard commitment to the school and school system, an educator must utilize available resources to help promote learning, acknowledge the diversity of his or her students, honor his or her signed school contract, and participate in the decision making process of the school. The last standard, commitment to the profession, requires the educator to provide accurate information and credentials as it pertains to his or her profession, report any violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina and continue to demonstrate growth professionally (16 NCAC 6C.0601).

Kentucky. The Code of Ethics for Kentucky School Certified Personnel was implemented in 1990 as a part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. This code is composed of three statements that tell educators what they should do-- this code is beneficence. The first statement of this Code is that Kentucky educators' shall safeguard the freedom to teach and learn, allow the pursuit of truth, nurture democratic citizenship, and strive toward excellence. The second statement is that Kentucky educators' should believe in the educational opportunity for all as well as the worth and dignity of each human being. The third statement describes what an educator should and should not do to the following: (a) Students (eight obligations, e.g., "Shall provide students with professional education services in a non-discriminatory manner and in consonance with accepted best practice known to the educator"), (b) Parents (seven obligations, e.g., "Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain, for the promotion of political candidates, or for partisan political activities"), and (c) Education Profession (six obligations, e.g., "Shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records of facts relating to the educators own qualification or those of other professionals") (704 KAR 20:680).

Texas. The Code of Ethics for Texas Educators delineates specific behaviors which reflect a violation of an educator's ethical obligations and which may subject an educator to sanctions. This code is non-maleficent and specifies what one should not do. The Code of Ethics addresses three categories/principles of educator conduct: ethical conduct generally, ethical conduct toward professional colleagues, and ethical conduct toward students. Each Principle is further defined by the inclusion of specific, observable standards of conduct that outline behaviors which are unethical and may subject the educator to sanctions (§247.2).

The first principle with enforceable standards is professional ethical conduct, practices, and performance. According to this principle, the educator should not knowingly engage in the following: the use of deceptive practices regarding school policies, submit fraudulent requests, falsify records or direct others to do so, or use school privileges or divert funds for personal use nor gain. Ethical conduct toward professional colleagues is the second principle with enforceable standards. This principle is comprised of standards that state that the educator shall not do the following to a colleague: make false statements, disclose personal information, interfere with political or citizenship rights, discriminate or coerce, promise special treatment for a decision, or retaliate against an individual who has filed a complaint. The last principle with enforceable standards is ethical conduct towards students. The standards of this principle state that an educator shall not do the following toward a student: solicit sex or engage in an relationship; mistreat which affects learning, safety, physical or mental health; discriminate against; furnish alcohol or illegal drugs to; misrepresent facts to; or reveal confidential information about (§247.2).

Comparison and Contrast of Georgia and Other States Code of Ethics

The states in which the codes of ethics were being compared (see Table 1) were Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Texas. For each states' code of ethics the following items were compared: purpose, type, enforceable, and basis. The codes of ethics for four out of those five states were enforceable. Florida was the only state where it was not enforceable. Campbell (2000) suggested that the purpose of a code of ethics can be as a mechanism for accountability and a framework for disciplinary action and sanctions of members or it can be used for guidance and standards. Accountability, disciplinary action and sanctions for educators is the purpose of the code of ethics for two states, Kentucky and Georgia. The purpose of the code for the other three states (Texas, North Carolina, Florida) is guidance and standards. Texas was the only state of the five to have a non-maleficence code of ethics. It was written from a negative perspective thus communicating to educators in Texas what is expected of them. Georgia was the only state that was neither beneficence nor non-maleficence. The other three states' (Kentucky, North Carolina, Florida) codes are beneficence, communicating to educators what they should do. For four of the five states, part of the basis of their codes of ethics was the student. The profession itself was part of the basis for three of the five states codes of ethics. The school system, parents, the public and colleagues were another part of the basis for different states.

Georgia Professional Standards Commission

The first provisions that required certificates of all teachers in schools that received state funds were in the school laws of 1858 (GAPSC, 2004). In 1924 the State Division of Certification was established, but it was not until 1946 that all

Table 1: Educational Codes of Ethics of Five Southeastern States.

States	Purpose	Type ¹	Enforceable	Basis
Florida	Guidance and Standards	Beneficence	No	Obligation to the students, public, and the education profession itself.
Georgia	Accountability, disciplinary actions, and sanctions	Combination	Yes	Ten standards that defined the professional behavior.
North Carolina	Guidance and standards	Beneficence	Yes	Commitment to the students, school, school system, and the profession.
Kentucky	Accountability, disciplinary actions, and sanctions	Beneficence	Yes	Obligations to the students, parents, and the education profession.
Texas	Guidance and standards	Non-maleficence	Yes	Ethical conduct in general, ethical conduct towards professional colleagues, and ethical conduct toward the student.

Note:¹Beneficence-what one should do and ethical principles were presented from a positive/proactive/imperative perspective.
 Maleficence- what one should not do and the ethical principles were presented from a negative/prohibitive perspective.

teachers were required to hold only a state teachers' certificate. Before 1946 teachers had to obtain a certificate from the county in which they taught as well as a state certificate.

There have been changes with teacher certification in the state of Georgia (GAPSC, 2004) over the past 15 years.

A legislative mandate enacted in July of 1991 created the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The statute, G.C.O.C. § 20-2-982, directed the PSC to do the following:

“(5) To adopt standards of professional performance and a code of professional ethics for educators, both of which shall represent standards of performance and conduct which are generally accepted by educators of this state; (6) To investigate reports of specified criminal conduct, violations of professional or ethical codes of conduct, and violations of certain rules, regulations, and policies by school system educators; (7) To enforce the requirement that local school systems promptly report specified criminal conduct of school system educators to the commission; and to improve disciplinary action or a denial of a certificate against an educator”(GAPSC, 2004).

Professional Standards Commission-Educator Ethics Division

The Educator Ethics Division is a division within the Professional Standards Commission. “The Educator Ethics Division was responsible for the adoption and advancement of a Code of Ethics and standards of conduct for Georgia educators, it received complaints of alleged breaches in the Code of Ethics, investigated allegations, reported facts of an investigation to the Professional Standards Commission, and facilitated due process for educators who were accused of misconduct” (GAPSC, 2004). This division provided information to local school systems and citizens of Georgia on what should be reported to the Professional Standards Commission about an educators' breach of Ethics, and how to report it. Educators' who had been found to have

breached the Code of Ethics and were placed on ethics monitoring status or suspension were overseen by the Educator Ethics Division (GAPSC, 2004).

Professional Practices Commission

The Professional Practices Commission (PPC) established and upheld ethical and professional standards within the teaching profession in Georgia (GAPSC, 2004). The PPC conducted investigations associated with possible violations of standards of conduct by educators. An educator under investigation had the due process right to a hearing before a platform of Professional Practices Commission members. After the PPC completes its investigation of an educator, it recommends what action, if any, should be taken against the educators' certificate to the Professional Standards Commission. The PPC members are appointed by the Georgia Board of Education and assigned to the Georgia Department of Education (GAPSC, 2004).

Educator Complaint Processes

In Georgia, an educator's certificate can be revoked or suspended if the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) determines that he or she is guilty of violating one or more of the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics. However, there are several processes that may occur before a decision is reached by the PSC. Those processes are: (1) Referral Process, (2) Investigative Process, and (3) Potential Disciplinary Actions enforced by the PSC.

Referral to Ethics

Educators can be referred to the Professional Standards Commission-Educator Ethics Division by any of the following means:

1. a local Georgia school system or Georgia university or college official may refer an educator to the Professional Standards Commission or Educator Ethics for any violation of the standards of the Code of Ethics (GAPSC, 2004).
2. a newspaper article that implicates an educator in a violation of any of the standards of the Code of Ethics is referred directly to the Educator Ethics Division for investigation (GAPSC, 2004).
3. a national educator clearinghouse could notify the Educator Ethics Division of a disciplinary action taken against an educators' certificate in another state (GAPSC, 2004).
4. an educators' petition for the right to reapply for a certificate that has been revoked (GAPSC, 2004).

The Investigative Process

There are several steps involved in the investigation of educators for standards violations:

1. Complaint received. When a complaint is received, the Ethics Review Committee makes a recommendation on whether or not there should be an investigation. A letter is sent to the complainant as well as the local school system about the disposition of the complaint (GAPSC, 2004).
2. Professional Standards Commission (PSC) staff initiates investigation. A letter is sent to the educator requesting information or a statement about the standard violation. An investigation occurs and a summary from that investigation is sent to the PSC (GAPSC, 2004).

3. Probable cause determination made. The Professional Standards Commission determines if probable cause exists to take disciplinary action and if they determine it is needed then whatever action is needed will be taken (GAPSC, 2004).
4. Consent or hearing offered. A letter notifying the educator of the proposed action to be decided by the PSC is sent. The educator has 30 days to respond in writing. The educator could request a hearing or consent to the PSC action (GAPSC, 2004).
5. OSAH Hearing held. The Office of State Administrative Hearings(OSAH) holds evidentiary hearings. The initial decision of the PSC is either accepted or is changed by the OSAH administrative law judge (GAPSC, 2004).
6. PSC Final Action Taken. If an educator does not respond to the initial decision and the PSC accepts the initial decision, it then becomes the final decision. The PSC or the educator could ask for a review. At the review, the PSC reviews the initial decision and makes a final decision. All appropriate parties are notified of the decision (GAPSC, 2004).
7. Appeals. The educator has the right to appeal to the Superior Court and the Court of Appeals after the PSC decision has been reviewed (GAPSC, 2004).

Potential Disciplinary Actions for Georgia Code of Ethics Violations

The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is the authority responsible for taking disciplinary action on any recommendation made by the Professional Practices Commission (PPC) against an educators' certificate. After an investigation, the PPC makes a recommendation to the PSC. There are at least seven potential disciplinary

actions the PSC could take against an educators' certificate. They are as follows:

1. Clearance. Clearance is a disciplinary action that results if the PPC recommends that no action be taken against the educators' certificate to the PSC. The public is not notified of this action but a copy of the clearance letter is kept in the educators' certification file (GAPSC, 2004).
2. Warning. A disciplinary action in which the educator receives a letter from the PSC expressing the PSCs' concern that the Code of Ethics has been violated but that no action will be taken against this violation is a warning. The public is not notified of this action but the educator is warned that additional violations of this or other standards of the code of ethics could result in the suspension or revocation of the educators' certificate. A copy of the warning letter remains in the educators' certification file (GAPSC, 2004).
3. Reprimand. A disciplinary action in which the educator receives a letter of reprimand for his or her actions as well as a warning against future violations of this or other standards of the code of ethics results in the suspension or revocation of the educators' certificate. The general public is not notified of this action but local school systems, RESAs, and colleges and universities within Georgia are notified. A copy of the reprimand letter is placed in the educators' certification file as well as kept on file at the PSCs Educator Ethics Division (GAPSC, 2004).
4. Suspension. This disciplinary action results in the suspension of an educators' certificate for a specified period of time and the educator can not be employed in any position that requires a certificate during this time. After

the suspension, the educators' certificate is automatically reinstated if it has not expired during the period of suspension. Notification is made to state and national educational agencies in addition to the suspension dates being posted on the PSC Certification Channel (GAPSC, 2004).

5. Revocation. A disciplinary action of revocation inactivates an educators' certificate. This action is permanent unless an educator reapplies for a certificate after three years from the date his or her certificate was revoked. The educator has to prove that the reasons for revocation no longer exist before he or she is granted the right to apply for a certificate. State and national educational agencies are notified of the revocation as well as a notation being made on the PSC Certification Channel (GAPSC, 2004).
6. Grant/Deny Right to Reapply. When an educator's certificate has been revoked, the educator can petition for the right to reapply for a certificate after the required period of time. The educator has to prove that the reasons for revocation no longer exist nor impede his or her performance (GAPSC, 2004).
7. Ethics Monitoring. There is no public notification of this disciplinary action. The PSC Educator Ethics Division monitors the educators' performance by making quarterly telephone calls to the educator's school employer. The educator would be on monitor status for at least a year (GAPSC, 2004).

Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators

The following descriptions of Professional Standards Commission cases provide examples of violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics. The violations are in the order of

the Georgia Code of Ethics standards beginning with Standard One: Criminal Acts.

Example of Standard One: Criminal Act. On or about June 4, 2001, the respondent was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license with knowledge, cocaine possession, tampering with physical evidence, and resisting an officer without violence. The PSC suspended the certificate of the respondent of PSC Case #02-09-764 for one year.

Example of Standard Two: Abuse of Students. In PSC Case # 02-07-209, the respondent's certificate was suspended for one week as a result of her standard violation. The respondent allegedly had a student searched by another student, then sent the student into a closet where the student was strip-searched by the respondent. The respondent admitted that she did search the child, but said it was school procedures at the time.

Example of Standard Three: Alcohol or Drugs. The respondent in PSC Case NO. 03-01-1402 was tested for alcohol after reports were made that the smell of alcohol was detected on the respondent during school hours. The results of the test were positive. This was the third incident during the school year in which the respondent had the smell of alcohol on his person at the school. The respondent denied consuming alcohol at school or reporting to school while under the influence. The PSC suspended the respondent's certificate for two years.

Example of Standard Four: Misrepresentation or Falsification. The respondent in PSC Case # 02-10-1122 allegedly falsified her college transcript in order to gain employment with a school system. The school system contacted the educator's alma mater and learned that the educator's reported grade point average was not the same as

the one on their transcript. The respondent admitted that she submitted altered transcripts to both the school system and to the PSC for certification purposes. She did not believe that she would qualify for either employment or certification with her actual grade point average. The respondent's certificate was revoked by the PSC.

Example of Standard Five: Public Funds and Property. A respondent took a computer from the school where he worked. The school system was unable to contact him over the summer. When he returned for this school year, he was confronted. Ultimately, he admitted to taking the computer and returned it. He resigned from the school system. This was PSC Case # 02-8-653 and the respondent's certificate was suspended for two weeks.

Example of Standard Six: Improper Remunerative Conduct. The respondent (PSC Case # 02-05-2123), a high school transportation teacher, accepted a vehicle donation in November 2001 and then sold the vehicle on January 14, 2002. The respondent failed to turn in the money immediately after the sale. When asked about the sale of the vehicle, the respondent had the money with him and turned it in to the school account. There was evidence that the respondent used the funds for his own purpose. The respondent received a reprimand for this violation.

Example of Standard Seven: Confidential Information. The respondent in PSC Case # 02-10-1111 allegedly had a copy of another employee's evaluation and showed that evaluation to other co-workers. The respondent admitted that he "messed up" by showing the evaluation to other staff members. The respondent received a warning for this violation.

Example of Standard Eight: Abandonment of Contract. On or about 4/23/01, the respondent in PSC Case # 02-07-341 signed a contract to teach the 2001-02 school year. On or about March 18, 2002, the respondent turned in a letter of resignation which would be effective April 1, 2002. The school did not release the respondent from his contract. As a result, the PSC suspended the respondent's certificate for six months.

Example of Standard Nine: Failure to Make a Required Report. A paraprofessional in the respondent's (PSC # 02-05-1978) class allegedly improperly disciplined students while under her supervision. The respondent was accused of failing to report such alleged and improper discipline to the principal. The respondent admitted that the paraprofessional occasionally argued with students and was often loud in her discourse with students. The respondent admitted that she saw the paraprofessional jerk a student by the hand and that she told the paraprofessional that this behavior was not proper. The respondent did not report this behavior to the principal. Furthermore, the respondent stated that she never saw the paraprofessional be physically abusive to any child but admitted that there had been occasions when she and the paraprofessional were separated during the day. The respondent understood that ultimately she was responsible for the paraprofessional's actions. When confronted with the allegations, the respondent resigned from the school and hired a lawyer for this matter. The respondent received a written warning from the PSC for her actions.

Example of Standard Ten: Professional Conduct. The respondent in PSC Case # 02-10-1124 allegedly was involved in an inappropriate relationship with a coworker and that the relationship occurred during school hours. The respondent allegedly had sex in his office at the school with the coworker after hours. It was also alleged that the

respondent used a school owned computer to communicate via email with the coworker and that these emails were personal and suggestive in nature. As a result, the PSC suspended the respondent's certificate for five months.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the related literature beginning with a review of related research studies, definitions of the different types of codes, an examination of the Georgia Code of Ethics as well as the codes of ethics of other states, a description of the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and organizations within it, detailed descriptions of the Educator Complaint processes, and examples of standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the procedures used to complete the study. It is divided into the following sections: Restatement of the purpose, research design, procedures for Part I (null hypotheses, population/sample, data collection, statistical analysis and level of significance) and procedures for Part II (null hypotheses, population/sample, instrumentation, validity, reliability, generalizability, data collection, and statistical analysis).

Restatement of the Purposes

The purposes of this two part study were to: (1) examine the standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that have led to educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004; and (2) to develop and administer survey to assess if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have adequate knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately to specific situations.

Research Design

For Part II, the research design for this study was a quantitative survey design. According to Creswell (2002), a survey can be used when a researcher seeks to describe trends in a large population of individuals. In this study, Georgia public educators were the population of individuals the researcher sought to describe. A survey design was described by Creswell (2002) as a quantitative research procedure in which the researcher administers a survey to a sample of people in order to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. For this study, educators from local school systems in Georgia were the sample of people administered the survey. The characteristic the researcher sought to describe was

the educators' knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics. Depending upon the results of the survey, professional learning on the Georgia Code of Ethics could be proposed.

Procedures For Part I

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses that were addressed in part one of this study were as follows:

H₀: [1] There were no statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates for gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision.

H₀: [2] There were no statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the frequency of violations that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates between each of the 10 standards and gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision.

Population/Sample

The population of part one of this study was all Professional Standards Commission educators' standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that resulted in the suspension or revocation of their certificate from 2002 through 2004.

Data Collection Procedures

An open records request form was completed and submitted to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission- Ethics Division by the researcher. In this request, the researcher asked for permission to review all of the final decisions of standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that had occurred from 2002 to 2004. For that time period, only final decisions that had resulted in the revocation or suspension of educators' certificates were analyzed by the

researcher. The researcher maintained confidentiality of all records. From these violations, the following data were obtained: standards violated, final decision (revocation/suspension), date of final decision, and educator gender. Only those standard violations that met the criterion, Suspension 10% or Revocation 5%-- of all the violations, were addressed in the survey. This criterion was established to ensure that the survey was comprised of the standards that are violated most frequently.

Codebook to Ready Data

The researcher used the computer database program, *Microsoft Excel*, to organize, compile, and retrieve the data. Table 2 displays the categories and meanings/subcategories used by the researcher to sort the text data obtained from the final decisions of standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from the Professional Standards Commission.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses for procedures in Part I of this study were descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics included frequency counts and percents; the inferential statistic was chi-square which was used to analyze the data for each null hypothesis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Prentice Hall, 2003) was used to analyze the data.

Level of Significance

The level of significance for all inferential statistics was $p \leq .05$.

Procedures For Part II

Null Hypotheses

H₀:^[3] There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females.

Table 2: Categories Used to Sort Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004

Categories	Meaning
PSC Case #	Case number assigned to the violation by the PSC.
Gender	M- Male; F- Female
Final Decision	S- Suspended; R- Revoked
Date of Final Decision	Date PSC issued disciplinary action.

Population/Sample

For Part II of the study, the sample selected for this study consisted of 1575 teachers from schools belonging to the seven school districts served by the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The Middle Georgia RESA is one of 17 regional educational service agencies that provide services to help to improve the effectiveness of the educational programs of its school system members. From those seven school districts, five elementary, five middle, and five high schools were asked to participate. At each school, 15 teachers were requested to complete and return a survey.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was used to collect data for this part of the study was the *Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics* (SGCE). This instrument was designed for this study by the researcher (see Appendix C). In designing this instrument, the researcher used the following procedures described by Creswell (2002):

- 1 . Specify the purpose statement.
- 2 . Review the literature.
- 3 . Write the questions.
- 4 . Test the questions.

The SGCE contained a demographics section and 24 statements. The demographics section asked the educators being surveyed to identify themselves by gender. The 24 statements were possible examples of standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics. Using a categorical scale, “yes” or “no”, participants were asked to determine if each statement was a violation.

Validity

An instrument is valid if meaning can be drawn from it and the scores from it (the instrument) can result in useful inferences about a sample or population (Creswell, 2002). There are several ways to establish validity. For this study, content was used to establish validity. Creswell (2002) described content validity “as the extent to which the questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions are representative of all possible questions that could be asked about the content or skills” (p. 184). The content of this survey was derived from both the standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that have resulted in suspended or revoked educator certificates from 2002 to 2004 and a panel of judges. The panel of judges consisted of teachers, assistant principals, principals from each grade level (elementary, middle and high school), and human resource directors.

Reliability

“Reliability means that individual scores from an instrument should be nearly the same or stable on repeated administrations of the instruments, they should be free from sources of measurement error, and they should be consistent” (Creswell, 2002, p. 180). The reliability of this study was determined by completing a test-retest correlation. According to Creswell (2002), “test-retest reliability examines the extent to which scores from one sample are stable over time from one test administration to another” (p. 181). A pilot study was conducted to field test the survey one week before administering the actual survey. The survey instrument of the pilot study was administered to four teachers each in one elementary, one middle, and one high school in a county within the Middle Georgia area. Test-retest statistical correlation techniques were used on the results of the survey from the pilot study.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey consisted of brief descriptions of the standard violations that have occurred in Georgia. The participants were asked to indicate “yes” if they perceived the statement to be a violation of the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics or “no” if they did not perceive this. Each school that participated in the survey received a packet containing self (researcher) addressed and stamped envelopes. Inside each envelope was a cover letter (Appendix A) and a copy of the survey. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and gave instructions on how to return it.

Statistical Analysis

For procedures for Part II of the study, the statistical analyses were descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics included frequency counts and percents; the inferential statistic was t-test which was used to test the hypothesis on gender.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purposes of this two part study were to: (1) examine the standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that have led to educator certificates being revoked or suspended from 2002 to 2004; and (2) to develop and administer a survey to assess if educators in selected local school systems in Georgia have adequate knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics to apply it accurately to specific situations.

Results For Part I

Description of the Sample

Originally for Part I of this study, the sample was to consist of Professional Standards Commission educators' standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that resulted in the suspension or revocation of their certificate from 1998 to 2004. There were two reasons for reducing the data collection from seven to three years: (1) the current Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators was adopted after July of 1999 and any cases before July of 1999 would be decided using the Code that was in place at that time, and (2) the timeliness for closing cases. A criterion, Suspension 10% or Revocation 5%, was established to ensure that only the standards violated the most frequently would be used. Since the number of years of data to be collected were reduced from seven to three years, the criteria established in the original design was not applied to the current design. The sample for this study consisted of 547 Professional Standards Commission educators' standards violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics that resulted in the suspension or revocation of certificates from 2002-2004. Only standard violations incidences that resulted in revoked or suspended certificates were examined.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Data

The data were analyzed to determine if there were significant differences across or between gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision (2002-2004). Descriptive statistics--frequency and percentages--were computed. The nonparametric test, chi-square goodness of fit, was used to test significant differences across gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision (2002-2004). The chi-square test of independence was used to test significant differences between gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision (2002-2004).

Null Hypothesis One

H₀: [1] There were no statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates for standard violations, final decisions, gender, and year of the final decision.

Descriptive Statistics

The standards violated that resulted in revocation or suspension of educators' certificate from 2002 to 2004 are displayed in Table 3. There were a total of 547 standard violations. Of those 547 standard violations, 77 decisions were missing from the final decision document. Abandonment of contract violations occurred 107 times (19.5%). Eighty-nine (16.2%) of the standards violated resulted from unprofessional conduct violations. Abuse of students occurred 80 times (14.6 %). Sixty-one (11.1 %) of the standards violated were a result of criminal acts.

Table 4 displays the frequency of revoked or suspended Georgia educator certificates resulting from 2002 to 2004 violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics standards. From 2002 to

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Educator Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004 that Resulted in Suspended or Revoked Educator Certificates

Standards of Code of Ethics	Frequency	Percentage
Criminal acts	61	11.2
Abuse of students	80	14.6
Alcohol or drug use	28	5.1
Misrepresentation/Falsification	48	8.8
Public fund/property misuse	37	6.8
Improper remunerative conduct	4	0.7
Confidential information	17	3.1
Abandonment of contract	107	19.6
Failure to make a required report	1	0.2
Professional conduct	89	16.2
Total	472	86.3
Missing ^a	75	13.7
TOTAL	547	100

Note: ^aStandard violation missing from final decision

Table 4: Frequency of Revoked or Suspended Georgia Educator Certificates Resulting from 2002 to 2004 Standard Violations

Standards of Code of Ethics	Suspended	Revoked
Criminal acts	25	36
Abuse of students	45	35
Alcohol or drug use	18	10
Misrepresentation/Falsification	35	13
Public fund/property misuse	31	6
Improper remunerative conduct	3	1
Confidential information	17	
Abandonment of contract	106	1
Failure to make a required report		1
Professional conduct	59	30
Total	339	133
Missing ^a	3	72
TOTAL		547

Note: ^aStandard violation missing from final decision

2004, 342 educator certificates were suspended and 205 were revoked. Thirty-six (n = 36) educator certificates were revoked as a result of criminal acts. Abandonment of contract (n = 106), professional conduct (n = 59), abuse of students (n = 45), misrepresentation/falsification (n = 35), public fund/property misuse (n = 31), alcohol or drug use (n = 18), confidential information (n = 17), and improper remunerative conduct (n = 3) resulted most frequently in suspended educator certificates for the 2002 to 2004 period.

Frequency of educator standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004 by gender are displayed in Table 5. Three hundred and seventeen (n = 317) of the standard violations were male where as 230 were female. Professional conduct (n = 64), abuse of students (n = 61), criminal acts (n = 41), and public fund/property misuse (n = 25) were the standards violated most frequently by males. Females most frequently occurring standard violations were alcohol or drug use (n = 16), misrepresentation/falsification (n = 32), and abandonment of contract (n = 74).

Table 6 displays the frequency of educator standard violations resulting in revoked or suspended certificates from 2002 to 2004. There were a total of 154 revoked or suspended educator certificates in 2002 as opposed to the 228 that were suspended in 2003 and 165 in 2004. Of the standard violations, abandonment of contract (n = 41) and improper remunerative conduct (n = 2) were the most frequently occurring violations for 2002 when compared to those that occurred in 2003 and 2004. Professional conduct (n = 41), abuse of students (n = 39), misrepresentation/falsification (n = 24), public fund/property misuse (n = 16) and alcohol or drug use (n = 11) were the most frequently occurring violations for 2003 when compared to those that occurred in 2002 and 2004. Criminal acts (n = 24) was the only frequently occurring standard violation for 2004 when compared to those that occurred in 2002 and 2003.

Table 5: Frequency of Educator Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004 that Resulted in Revoked or Suspended Educator Certificates by Gender

Standards of Code of Ethics	Male	Female
Criminal acts	41	20
Abuse of students	61	19
Alcohol or drug use	12	16
Misrepresentation/Falsification	16	32
Public fund/property misuse	25	12
Improper remunerative conduct	3	1
Confidential information	6	11
Abandonment of contract	33	74
Failure to make a required report	1	
Professional conduct	64	25
Total	262	210
Missing ^a	55	20
TOTAL		547

Note: ^aStandard violation missing from final decision

Table 6: Frequency of Educator Standard Violations Resulting in Revoked or Suspended Certificates from 2002 to 2004

Standards of Code of Ethics	2002	2003	2004
Criminal acts	15	22	24
Abuse of students	18	39	23
Alcohol or drug use	9	11	8
Misrepresentation/Falsification	7	24	17
Public fund/property misuse	8	16	13
Improper remunerative conduct	2	1	1
Confidential information	4	5	8
Abandonment of contract	41	38	28
Failure to make a required report	1	1	
Professional conduct	19	41	29
Total	124	197	151
Missing ^a	30	31	14
TOTAL		547	

Note: ^aStandard violation missing from final decision

Inferential Statistics

A nonparametric test, chi-square goodness of fit, was calculated comparing the frequency of occurrence of each value of the standard violations. Improper remunerative conduct ($n = 4$) and failure to make a required report ($n = 1$) were standard violations whose cell sizes were less than 5 and thus were deleted from the test. It was hypothesized that each value would occur an equal number of times, 58.4. A significant difference (Table 7) from the hypothesized value was found (chi-square (7) = 119.501, $p \leq .000$). Therefore, there were not equal numbers of violations for each standard of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004. It appears that there are more than expected violations of the abandonment of contract standard and fewer than expected violations of the alcohol or drug use standard. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of standard violations resulting in the suspension or revocation of educator certificates across all 10 standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics. Null hypothesis one was rejected as it related to standard violations.

A chi-square goodness of fit was calculated comparing the frequency of occurrence of each value of the final decisions (revoked/suspended). It was hypothesized that revocations would occur an equal number of times as suspensions. A significant difference (Table 8) from the hypothesized value was found (chi-square (1) = 34.313, $p \leq .000$). Therefore, there were not equal numbers of educator certificates being revoked as compared to those being suspended. There were more educator certificates being suspended than revoked. There was a statistically significant difference for the total three year period in the total frequency of violations across all 10 standards that resulted in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates for final decisions (revoked/suspended). Null hypothesis one was rejected as it related to final decisions.

Table 7: Observed and Expected Values of Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004

Standards of Code of Ethics	Observed N	Expected N
Criminal acts	61	58.4
Abuse of students	80	58.4
Alcohol or drug use	28	58.4
Misrepresentation/Falsification	48	58.4
Public fund/property misuse	37	58.4
Confidential information	17	58.4
Abandonment of contract	107	58.4
Professional conduct	89	58.4
Total	467	467

Note: $\chi^2 = 119.501$, $df = 7$, $p \leq .000$

Table 8: Observed and Expected Values of Suspended or Revoked Educator Certificates from 2002 to 2004 for Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics

Final Decision	Observed N	Expected N
Suspended	342	273.5
Revoked	205	273.5
Total	547	547

Note: $X^2 = 34.313$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .000$

A chi-square goodness of fit was calculated comparing the frequency of occurrence of each assumed value of gender (Table 9). It was hypothesized that males and females would have an equal number of standard violations. A significant difference from the hypothesized values was found (chi-square (1) = 13.837, $p \leq .000$). There were significantly more standard violations by males than females. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference for the total three year period in the total frequency of standard violations across all 10 standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics for gender. An additional, chi-square goodness of fit was calculated comparing the expected frequency of occurrence based on actual percents of males and females in the teaching force (Table 10). The expected values for each gender was 447.8 (females) and 99.2 (males). A significant difference from the actual values was found (chi-square (1) = 584.313, $p \leq .000$). The males had a statistically significantly greater number of standard violations than the females. Null hypothesis one is rejected as it relates to gender.

A chi-square goodness of fit was calculated comparing the frequency of occurrence standard violations of each year for the three year period (2002-2004). It was hypothesized that the number of violations each year would occur equally, 182.3. A significant difference (Table 11) from the hypothesized value was found (chi-square (2) = 17.488, $p \leq .000$). There were more standard violations than expected in 2003, and fewer standard violations than expected in 2002. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference from 2002 to 2004 in the total frequency of standards violations that occurred across all 10 standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics for years. Null hypothesis one was rejected as it related to the year of final the decision.

Table 9: Assumption of Equality for Observed and Expected Values of Educators' Gender for Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004—Equal Expected Values

Gender	Observed N	Expected N
Female	230	273.5
Male	317	273.5
Total	547	547

Note: $X^2 = 13.837$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .000$

Table 10: Actual Observed and Expected Values of Educators' Gender for Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from 2002 to 2004—Population Based Expected Values

Gender	Observed N	Expected N
Female	230	447.8
Male	317	99.2
Total	547	547

Note: $X^2 = 584.313$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .000$

Table 11: Observed and Expected Values from 2002 to 2004 of Standard Violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics

Year of Final Decision	Observed N	Expected N
2002	154	182.3
2003	228	182.3
2004	165	182.3
Total	547	547

Note: $X^2 = 17.488$, $df = 2$, $p \leq .000$

Null Hypothesis Two

H₀: [2] There was no statistically significant differences from 2002 to 2004 in the frequency of violations that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates between each of the 10 standards and gender, standard violations, final decisions, and year of the final decision. The descriptive statistics for null hypothesis two were presented under *Null Hypothesis One*.

Inferential Statistics

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of standard violations for men and women (Table 12). Improper remunerative conduct (n = 3) and failure to make a required report (n = 1) were the standard violations whose cell sizes were less than 5 thus were deleted from the test. A significant relationship was found (chi-square (7) = 69.648, $p \leq .000$). Men (55%) were more likely to violate standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics than women (44.5%). Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference for the three year period in the frequency of standard violations that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates between standards violated and gender. Professional conduct, abuse of students and criminal acts were the standards violated most frequently by male educators. Female educators violated the abandonment of contract and misrepresentation/falsification standards most frequently. Thus, null hypothesis two was rejected as it related to standard violations and gender.

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of standard violations and year of the final decision (Table 13). No significant relationship was found (chi-square (18) = 22.747, $p \leq .201$). Standards violated and year of the final decision appear to be independent events. Therefore, there was no significant difference for the total three year period in the frequency of standard violations that resulted in the revocation or suspension of certificates

Table 12: Relationship between Standard Violated and Gender

Standards of Code of Ethics	Male Frequency	Female Frequency	Total Frequency
Criminal acts	41	20	61
Abuse of students	61	19	80
Alcohol or drug use	12	16	28
Misrepresentation/Falsification	16	32	48
Public fund/property misuse	25	12	37
Confidential information	6	11	17
Abandonment of contract	33	74	107
Professional conduct	64	25	89
Total	258	209	467

Note: $X^2 = 69.648$, $df = 7$, $p \leq .000$

Table 13: Relationship between Standard Violated and Year of Final Decision

Standards of Code of Ethics	2002 Frequency	2003 Frequency	2004 Frequency
Criminal acts	15	22	24
Abuse of students	18	39	23
Alcohol or drug use	9	11	8
Misrepresentation/Falsification	7	24	17
Public fund/property misuse	8	16	13
Improper remunerative conduct	2	1	1
Confidential information	4	5	8
Abandonment of contract	41	38	28
Failure to make a required report	1		
Professional conduct	19	41	29
Total	124	197	32.0

Note: $X^2 = 22.747$, $df = 18$, $p \leq .201$

between standards violated and year of the final decision. Thus, null hypothesis two was accepted as it pertained to standard violations and year of the final decision.

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of standards violations for revoked or suspended educator certificates (Table 14). Improper remunerative conduct (n = 3 revoked, 1 suspended), confidential information (n = 17 revoked), abandonment of contract (n = 106 suspended, 1 revoked), and failure to make a required report (n = 1 suspended) were standard violations whose cell sizes were less than 5 thus were deleted from the test. A significant relationship was found (chi-square (5) = 23.219, $p \leq .000$). There were several standard violations that resulted in educator certificates being suspended rather than revoked. Professional conduct, misrepresentation/falsification and public fund/property use were those standard violations. Thus, null hypothesis two was rejected as it pertained to standard violations and final decisions (revoked/suspended).

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of revoked or suspended (final decision) educator certificates for year of the final decision (Table 15). No significant relationship was found (chi-square (2) = .548, $p \leq .760$). The year of the final decision and final decision (revoked/suspended) appear to be independent events. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted as it related to the relationship between year of the final decision and final decision (revoked/suspended).

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of revoked or suspended educator certificates for men and women (Table 16). A significant relationship was found (chi-square (1) = 37.444, $p \leq .000$). Overall, men were more likely to have their educator certificates revoked than women. Thus, null hypothesis two was rejected as it related to the relationship between revoked or suspended educator certificates and gender.

Table 14: Relationship between Standards Violated and Revoked/Suspended Educator Certificates

Standards of Code of Ethics	Suspended Frequency	Revoked Frequency	Total Frequency
Criminal acts	25	36	61
Abuse of students	45	35	80
Alcohol or drug use	18	10	28
Misrepresentation/Falsification	35	13	48
Public fund/property misuse	31	6	37
Professional conduct	59	30	89
Total	213	130	343

Note: $X^2 = 23.219$, $df = 5$, $p \leq .000$

Table 15: Relationship between Year of Final Decision and Final Decision (Revoked/Suspended)

Year of Final Decision	Suspended Frequency	Revoked Frequency	Total
2002	100	54	154
2003	141	87	228
2004	101	64	165
Total	342	205	547

Note: $X^2 = .548$, $df = 2$, $p \leq .760$

Table 16: Relationship between Final Decision and Gender

Final Decision	Female Frequency	Male Frequency	Total
Suspended	178	164	154
Revoked	52	153	228
Total	230	317	547

Note: $X^2 = 37.444$, $df = 1$, $p \leq 0.000$

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of year of revoked or suspended educator certificates for males and females (Table 17). No significant relationship was found (chi-square (2) = 2.195, $p \leq .334$). The year of the final decision and gender appear to be independent events. Thus, null hypothesis two was accepted as it related to the relationship between year of the final decision and gender.

Summary of Findings

A summary of the results from the testing of the two null hypotheses for Part I of the research study are presented in Table 18. The findings of part one of this study indicated the following:

1. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more men than women violating the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics.
2. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more standards being violated than others. Abandonment of contract, professional conduct, abuse of students and criminal acts standards had the highest numbers of violations.
3. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more educator certificates being suspended than revoked for standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics.
4. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more standard violations resulting in suspended or revoked educator certificates occurring in a particular year than the other years. In 2003 there were more standard violations occurring than in 2002 and 2004.
5. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more gender violations of certain standards than others. Male educators had high numbers of violations of the professional conduct, abuse of students and criminal act standards. Female educators had high numbers of violations of the abandonment of contract and misrepresentation or falsification standards.

Table 17: Relationship between Year of Final Decision and Gender

Year of Final Decision	Female Frequency	Male Frequency	Total
2002	60	94	154
2003	93	135	228
2004	77	88	165
Total	230	317	547

$X^2 = 2.195$, $df = 2$, $p \leq .334$

Table 18 Results of Hypothesis Tests for Part One

Hypothesis	Variable	Significance Level	Statistically Significant	Null Hypothesis Accepted/Rejected
H ₀₁	Gender	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Standard Violations	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Final Decisions	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Year of the Final Decision	.000	Yes	Rejected
H ₀₂	Standard Violated and Gender	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Standard Violated and Year of the Final Decision	.201	No	Accepted
	Standard Violated and Final Decisions	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Year of the Final Decision and Final Decision	.760	No	Accepted
	Final Decision and Gender	.000	Yes	Rejected
	Year of the Final Decision and Gender	.334	No	Accepted

6. For the three year period (2002-2004), there was no relationship between the standard violated and the year in which the final decision was made.
7. For the three year period, there were more standard violations resulting in suspended educator certificates than revoked. Professional conduct, misrepresentation/falsification, and public fund/property misuse were the standards violations resulting in the most suspended educator certificates.
8. For the three year period (2002-2004), there was no relationship between the year a final decision was made and the final decision of revoked or suspended educator certificates.
9. For the three year period (2002-2004), there were more educator certificates of men being revoked than women.
10. For the three year period (2002-2004), there was no relationship between the year in which a final decision was made and gender.

Results For Part II

Instrument Development

Twenty-four final decisions resulting in the revocation or suspension of educator certificates by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics were randomly selected in the instrument development of the Survey on the Georgia Code of Ethics. The 24 statements were descriptions of examples of the following standard violations: criminal acts, unprofessional conduct, abandonment of contract, student abuse, misrepresentation/falsification, confidential information, alcohol or drug use and standardized testing.

Results of Validity

A panel of judges evaluated the survey (Appendix C). The panel of judges consisted of 10 educators from different areas of an educational setting: one principal from an elementary, middle, and high school; one assistant principal from an elementary, middle, and high school; one teacher from an elementary, middle and high school; and one human resource director. The judges evaluated each statement for content and difficulty (Appendix B). In their evaluation for content validity, the judges were asked to determine if each statement reflected one of the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics. If she or he perceived the statement to be valid, then she or he was asked to indicate yes. If she or he perceived the statement as not valid, then she or he was asked to indicate no and suggest how the statement could be changed to make it valid. It was suggested by the judges that four of the statements be revised to make the content valid. Those statements were re-evaluated by the researcher and the suggested changes were made a part of the final version of the survey (Appendix D). To determine the readability, the judges examined each statement to see if it was easy to understand. If the judge perceived it to be easy to understand, then she or he would indicate a “yes”. If the judge perceived it to be difficult to understand, then she or he would indicate a “no” and suggest how the statement could be changed to make it understandable. There were no suggestions made by the judges regarding readability.

Results of Reliability

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics using the results of the pilot study. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(10) = .905, p \leq .01$), indicating a strong reliability between the scores from the pilot study using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Prentice Hall, 2003).

Response Analysis

In the original research design for this research study, the sample selected for this research study were to consist of 1575 teachers from schools belonging to the seven school districts served by the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). Only six of the seven school districts agreed to participate in the research study. However, not every school within those six school districts volunteered to participate. Reasons given for not participating included the following: teachers have been asked to do so much this year; teachers were involved with graduation or professional development thus will not have time to complete surveys; and no principal was available to make decision about surveys. As a result, the sample size was reduced to 230 educators from various schools belonging to six school districts. Thus, 230 surveys (N= 230) were distributed and 171 surveys were completed and return, resulting in a return rate of 74.3%.

Demographics of Respondents

The first item on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics collected demographic data as it pertained to gender. The demographic data indicated 53.8 % of the respondents were female and that 46.2 % of the respondents were male.

Frequency of Responses

There were 24 statements on the Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE) that were responded to by 171 educators from various schools within six school districts belonging to the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The content of each statement was derived from final decisions citing standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics from the Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE) used a categorical scale of yes or no for responses from respondents. If the

respondents perceived the statement to be a standard violation of the Georgia Code of Ethics than a response of “yes” was indicated. If the respondents perceived that the statement was not a standard violation of the Georgia Code of Ethics than a response of no was indicated. The statements on the Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE) were scored and percentage of responses to each statement on the survey was determined. The frequency and percentage of responses of the respondents to each statement of the survey was provided in Table 19 and in Table 20 those responses are provided by gender.

Each of the 24 statements were possible examples of standard violations of the Georgia Code of Ethics. Statements 4, 9, 12, 14 and 24 of the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics (SGCE) were possible examples of abandonment of contract standard violations. Three of those five statements were responded correctly to by 89.5% or more of those that responded. Those statements were: 4 (94.7%- 74 (males), 88 (females)), 12 (94.7%-75 (males), 87 (females)), and 14 (89.5%-66 (males), 87 (females)). The remaining two statements, 9 (70.2%-54 (males), 66 (females)) and 24 (70.2%- 58 (males), 62 (females)), were responded to incorrectly by 70.2% of those responding to SGCE. Possible criminal acts standard violations were statements 5, 11, 18 and 19. Three of four of those statements were responded to correctly by 91.2% or more of the respondents. Those three statements were: 5 (91.2%- 70 (males), 86 (females)), 11 (98.2%- 78 (males), 90 (females)), and 18 (94.7%- 74 (males), 88 (females)). Only 54.4% (48-males, 45-females) of the respondents responded correctly to statement 19. Statements 8, 16, and 20 were possible examples of alcohol or drug use standard violations. Respondents responded correctly 91.2% or more to each statement. Statement 8 had a 91.2% (70-males, 86-females) correct response rate, statement 16 a 95.9% (75-males, 89-females) correct response rate and a 97.7% (77-males, 90-females) for statement 20. Possible misrepresentation or falsification standard

Table 19: Responses to Statements on Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics

Statements	Yes		No		No Response		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1	164*	95.9	7	4.1			171
2	162*	94.7	9	5.3			171
3	137*	80.1	32	18.7	2	1.2	171
4	162*	94.7	9	5.3			171
5	156*	91.2	14	8.2	1	.6	171
6	169*	98.8	2	1.2			171
7	138*	84.7	33	19.3			171
8	156*	91.2	15	8.8			171
9	51*	29.8	120	70.2			171
10	156*	91.2	12	7.0	3	1.8	171
11	168*	98.2	3	1.8			171
12	162*	94.7	9	5.3			171
13	149*	87.1	21	12.3	1	.6	171
14	153*	89.5	17	9.9	1	.6	171
15	14	8.2	156*	91.2	1	.6	171
16	164*	95.9	7	4.1			171
17	158*	92.4	12	7.0	1	.6	171
18	162*	94.7	6	3.5	3	1.8	171
19	76	44.4	93*	54.4	2	1.2	171
20	167*	97.7	3	1.8	1	.6	171
21	166*	97.1	2	1.2	3	1.8	171
22	133*	77.8	36	21.1	2	1.2	171
23	158*	92.4	11	6.4	2	1.2	171
24	49*	28.7	120	70.2	2	1.2	171

* = Correct answer.

Table 20: Responses to Statements on Survey of Georgia Code of Ethics by Gender

Statements	Yes	Males		Yes	Females	
		No	No Response		No	No Response
1	75*	4		89*	3	
2	72*	7		90*	2	
3	58*	19	2	79*	13	
4	74*	5		88*	4	
5	70*	8	1	86*	6	
6	78*	1		91*	1	
7	63*	16		75*	17	
8	70*	9		86*	6	
9	25*	54		26*	66	
10	72*	5	2	84*	7	1
11	78*	1		90*	2	
12	75*	4		87*	5	
13	65*	13	1	84*	8	
14	66*	12	1	87*	5	
15	68	73*		8	83*	1
16	75*	4		89*	3	
17	69*	9	1	89*	3	
18	74*	3	2	88*	3	1
19	30	48*	1	46	45*	1
20	77*	1	1	90*	2	
21	76*	1	2	90*	1	1
22	60*	17	2	73*	19	
23	70*	8	1	88*	3	1
24	20*	58	1	29*	62	1

* = Correct answer.

violations were statements 10, 13, and 17. All three statements were responded correctly to by 87.1% or more of the respondents. For the three statements, the correct response rate was 91.2% (72-males, 84-females) for statement 10, 87.1% (65-males, 84-females) for statement 13 and 92.4% (69-males, 89-females) for statement 17. Statement 15 was a possible example of a violation of the confidential information standard. This statement was responded to correctly by 91.2% (73-males, 83-females) of the respondents surveyed. Possible violations of the school property or funds standard was statement 6. This statement was responded to correctly by 98.8% (78-males, 91 –females) of the respondents surveyed. Statements 2 and 3 involved descriptions of testing violations. Statement 2 was responded to correctly by 94.7% (72-males, 90-females) of the respondents and 80.1% (58-males, 79-females) of the respondents responded correctly to statement 3.

Descriptive Statistics

The mean and standard deviation were calculated for the scores of each gender responding to the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics (Table 21). The mean correct score for females ($M= 20.82$, $SD = 1.815$) was slightly higher than the mean correct score for males ($M= 20.05$, $SD = 2.224$).

Null Hypothesis Three

H_0 : [3] There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females.

Inferential Statistics

An independent sample t-test was used to test for a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females. The difference between the mean score correct for males versus females was

statistically significant ($t = 2.475$, $df = 109$, $p \leq .014$), with the males mean correct score being statistically significantly lower than females. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females.

Table 21: Mean and Standard Deviation for the Scores of Each Gender

Gender	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation
Female	92	20.82	1.815
Male	79	20.05	2.224
Total	171	20.46	2.044

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study consisted of two parts. For each part of the study, chapter five contains a discussion, conclusions followed by recommendations.

Part I

Discussion

Part I of the study examined and compared several different variables: standard violations, final decisions (revoked/suspended), year of final decision (2002-2004), and gender. A nonparametric test, chi-square goodness of fit was used to test significant differences across standard violations, final decisions (revoked/suspended), year of final decision (2002-2004), and gender at the $p \leq .05$. Statistical significant differences were obtained for all of the variables. A statistical significant difference was obtained across all standard violations for the three year period of revoked or suspended educator certificates. Abandonment of contract, unprofessional conduct, abuse of students and criminal acts were the standard violations violated the most during that three year period. A statistical significant difference was obtained across the three year period for final decisions. There were more educator certificates being suspended rather than revoked during that three year period. A statistical significant difference was obtained across the three year period in the frequency of standard violations. In the year of 2003, there were more standard violations that resulted in revoked or suspended educator certificates than in 2002 and 2004. A statistical significant difference was obtained across gender for the three year period in revoked or suspended educator certificates. In both statistical tests of the expected and actual, male educators had more standard violations than females.

A nonparametric test, chi-square test of independence was used to test significant differences between standard violations, final decisions (revoked/suspended), year of final decision (2002-2004), and gender at the $p \leq .05$. Statistical significant differences were obtained three of the six comparisons. A statistical significant relationship was obtained for standard violated and gender. Professional conduct, abuse of students, and criminal acts were the standards violated the most by males. Abandonment of contract was the standard violated the most by females. A statistical significant relationship was obtained for standards violated and final decisions. Professional conduct and abuse of students were the standard violations for which educator certificates were suspended. Revoked educator certificates for the three year period were mostly a result of violations of the criminal acts, abuse of students and professional conduct standards. A statistical relationship was obtained for final decision and gender. Female educator certificates were suspended more frequently than male educator certificates for standard violations during the three year period. But male educator certificates were revoked more frequently than female educator certificates during the three year period.

Conclusions

The results of part I of this study indicate that there is a need for additional research on the Georgia Code of Ethics for educators. This research study found significant differences in several different areas but the most important was gender. There was a statistically significant difference in gender as it pertains to standards violated and final decisions. Two factors that could have resulted in there being significant differences between gender: (1) Male educators are not as aware of the Georgia Code of Ethics as female educators; and (2) Inconsistency in the final decisions made by the Professional Standards Commission.

Recommendations for Professional Standards Commission

Based on the findings of part one of this research study, the following recommendations are suggested to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) for consideration:

1. Input final decision documents into a computer database.
2. Include in each final decision document the actual standard violated by the educator.

Part II

Discussion

Part II of the research study examined and compared one variable, gender, at the $p \leq .05$. An independent sample t-test was used to test for a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics for males versus females. A statistical significant difference was obtained. There was a difference in the mean score correct of the males versus that of the females. But both groups did not demonstrate 100 percent knowledge of the Georgia Code of Ethics. There could be several reasons for this: (1) the respondents to the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics were not familiar with the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics; (2) the respondents did not thoughtfully consider each statement on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics; and (3) the purpose of the survey was not important to the respondents.

Conclusions

The results of the findings of part two of this study could indicate a need for more professional learning on the Georgia Code of Ethics for educators in the Middle Georgia area. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean score correct on the Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics, with the mean score for males being statistically lower than females. In previous research conducted by Joyner (1999), a t-test was used to determine if a significant

difference existed among Georgia educators in their ability to identify unethical behaviors based upon survey results. Joyner (1999) found that a significant difference existed at the .01 level, with the mean score of male respondents being 83.9 and female respondents was 87.3.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings of part two of this research study, the following recommendations are suggested for considerations:

1. If this study is repeated and a survey is used for the data collection, it is recommended that the researcher does not survey at the end of the school year.
2. If this study is repeated, it needs to be conducted using the survey instrument with a larger sample size representative of the educators in Georgia.
3. Professional learning experiences in either college and university or local school districts.

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APPENDIX A COVER LETTER FOR EDUCATORS

Dear Educator:

I am writing to request your participation in a dissertation research titled "An Examination of Standard Violations from 2002 to 2004 of the Georgia Code of Ethics." This dissertation research is being conducted as the final requirement for my Doctorate of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia, under the direction of:

Dr. William Swan, Professor
College of Education, Program for Educational Leadership
131 River's Crossing
850 College Station Road
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602
(706)542-4074

The dissertation research focuses on the ten standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics and educators knowledge of them. The selected participants are educators in school districts belonging to the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA).

Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary. However, I would hope that you see the potential benefit in this research dissertation and choose to participate. Please know that your participation is completely anonymous. The survey contains a demographics section that asks you, the participant, to check the number of years of teaching experience as well as the grade level and respond yes or no to 25 statements. It will only take 20 minutes for you to respond to the survey. Your school should complete and return the survey to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope or packet provided.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this dissertation research. If additional information is needed to help complete this request, please do not hesitate to email me at: hfordham@uga.edu.

Sincerely,

Hope L. Fordham
Doctoral Candidate

Research at The University of Georgia which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Institutional Review Board, Office of the Vice President for Research, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Center, The University of Georgia, and Athens, Ga. 30602-7411; Telephone (706)542-3199.

APPENDIX B LETTER TO PANEL OF JUDGES

Dear Educator:

I am writing to request your participation in a dissertation research titled "An Examination of Standard Violations from 2002 to 2004 of the Georgia Code of Ethics." This dissertation research is being conducted as the final requirement for my Doctorate of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia, under the direction of:

Dr. William Swan, Professor
College of Education, Program for Educational Leadership
131 River's Crossing
850 College Station Road
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602
(706)542-4074

The dissertation research focuses on the ten standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics and educators knowledge of them. The selected participants are educators in school districts belonging to the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA).

Your participation in the study is needed to help establish the content validity of the attached survey (Survey of the Georgia Code of Ethics). The survey contains 24 statements. To help in establishing content validity, I need for you to do the following: 1. Examine the content of each statement on the survey to help determine if it is valid. Does the statement reflect one of the ten standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics? If you think the statement is valid, circle yes. If you do not think it is valid, circle no and provide a suggestion as to how I could change it to make it valid. I have provided a copy of the Georgia Code of Ethics to help you. 2. Determine the level of difficulty for each statement. Is the statement easy to understand? If you think the statement is easy to understand, circle yes. If you do think it is difficult to understand, circle no and provide a suggestion as to how I could change it. Once you complete this process, return the survey to me in the package provided.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this dissertation research. If additional information is needed to help complete this request, please do not hesitate to email me at: hfordham@uga.edu.

Sincerely,

Hope L. Fordham
Doctoral Candidate

Research at The University of Georgia which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Institutional Review Board, Office of the Vice President for Research, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Center, The University of Georgia, and Athens, Ga. 30602-7411; Telephone (706)542-3199.

**APPENDIX C ORIGINAL COPY OF THE
SURVEY OF THE GEORGIA CODE OF ETHICS**

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender: ___ Female ___ Male

II. **Directions:** By circling yes or no for each statement, please indicate if the following statements below are violations of the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics. A "yes" response indicates that the statement is a violation and a "no" response indicates that the statement is not a violation.

<p>1. The parents of two of the Educator's students complained that the Educator abused their children. In one incident, the Educator allegedly picked up a male band member off his feet and pushed or shoved him against something, leaving a bruise on his arm. Additionally, the Educator allegedly yelled at the student and used profanity. In the second incident, the Educator allegedly slapped a female student after she called the Educator by his first name.</p>	YES	NO
<p>2. During the administration of the Stanford 9 Test, the Educator, in the presence of four other Teachers, allegedly discussed test questions on sections of the test which the students had not been tested. Another teacher alleged that the Educator made statements indicating the Educator had looked forward into the test booklets and read some questions for upcoming tests.</p>	YES	NO
<p>3. The Educator allegedly checked the results of the fourth grade standardized tests following the completion of each test and gave feedback to students about their performance. The Educator admitted that she did make notes during the testing, reviewed or "spot checked" the test afterwards, and used the information to determine if the students had tried their best or not.</p>	YES	NO
<p>4. The Educator signed a contract agreeing to teach the school year. The Educator failed to return to work after the Thanksgiving holidays. He did not turn in a letter of resignation nor did he call. The school's efforts to reach him were unsuccessful. The Educator stated the school was a "hostile environment" and he chose not to return after the holidays.</p>	YES	NO
<p>5. The Educator was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana and methamphetamines. The arrest was not related to school business, nor did it occur on a school campus.</p>	YES	NO
<p>6. Educator admitted to having stolen students' medication. The school system recorded the Educator entering and going through bottles in the vault where medications were kept.</p>	YES	NO
<p>7. Educator was returning to school after running an errand when a student nearly crashed into the Educator's car. The student was driving without permission during school hours, with several other student passengers. Educator, shaken and scared at having almost been hit, got out of his car and yelled at the student regarding his driving. He took the student's keys and told him to meet him at his teacher's office. The Educator told the student "if you had hit me, I would have whipped you're ass." Educator never made any aggressive motions or moves towards the student.</p>	YES	NO

8. The Educator submitted to drug screening tests that returned positive for controlled substances/drugs. The Educator admitted to using the controlled substance/drug Ecstasy.	YES	NO
9. The Educator signed a contract to teach the school year. One month into the beginning of that school year, the Educator turned in a letter of resignation that stated that she was not cut out for this line of work.	YES	NO
10. The Educator, an alternative school principal, allegedly directed a subordinate to sign as the hearing officer for hearings that the subordinate did not conduct. The Educator admits that he asked the assistant principal to sign the hearing documents as the hearing officer. There was no malice or any attempt to deprive students of their rights. His intent was to speed up the hearing process.	YES	NO
11. The Educator was arrested and charged with two counts of Marijuana Possession. On a separate occasion, the Educator was arrested and found guilty of Drug Trafficking.	YES	NO
12. The Educator signed a contract to teach for the school year. Two to three days into the school year, the Educator left an undated note in his classroom and left the campus and has never returned.	YES	NO
13. An educator was employed by a High School in Georgia. Currently, Educator works as an assistant band director for a Middle School in another Georgia County . During the school year it came to the attention of the PSC that the Respondent had an out of state teaching certificate, which on that date was suspended by the Board of Education for that state for three years. The basis of the suspension of the Educator's out of state teaching certificate was violations of school policy relating to the handling of money and inability to account for a shortage of up to \$6900 in funds as well as insubordination.	YES	NO
14. The School District of in a county out of state filed a complaint against Educator for an alleged breach of employment contract. The hearing regarding Educator's out of state teaching certificate was held at the beginning of the calendar year. The Educator submitted to Petitioner an application for an upgrade to her Georgia certificate to teach. On application, Respondent answered "no" to the question, "Have you ever surrendered a teaching certificate/credential/license/permit, or had one denied, revoked or suspended, or is any investigation or adverse action now pending against you?" The Educator's out of state certificate to teach was suspended retroactively for breach of contract.	YES	NO
15. The Educator gave a copy of a student's schedule to the parent of that student.	YES	NO
16. The school system alleged that the Educator was intoxicated while at school and was found in possession of a bottle of wine in the classroom.	YES	NO
17. The Educator alleged altered a document and signed the name of her commanding officer in the U. S. Army Reserve. The Educator also allegedly failed to follow the proper procedures for requesting military leave, in violation of the school system's existing policy. The Educator does not deny that she typed out of a	YES	NO

separate request for leave and signed her commanding officer's signature. She stated that this is a common practice in the unit where she serves.		
18. The Educator was arrested and charged with six counts of theft by taking. Four counts were not prosecuted. The Educator was sentenced concurrently for the remaining two counts and received four years confinement and six year's probation.	YES	NO
19. The Educator was arrested but not charged with Public Indecency.	YES	NO
20. The Educator was tested for alcohol after reports were made that the smell of alcohol was detected on the Educator during school hours. The results of the test were positive. This was the third incident during the school year in which the Educator had the smell of alcohol on his person at the school.	YES	NO
21. The Educator allegedly made inappropriate written (e-mail) contact via the Internet and he inappropriately touched students. The Educator admitted that conduct with students could be considered inappropriate. He also admitted to sending e-mail messages to students and to rubbing the shoulders of a student.	YES	NO
22. The Educator allegedly used inappropriate discipline by holding a first grader's arm so firmly that it caused bruising. The Educator said that on one occasion she escorted the student to his seat by placing her hand under his arm. The Educator denies squeezing the student's arm. The Educator admits she has tapped the top of the student's hand with two fingers and she has taken him to the bathroom to scold him.	YES	NO
23. The Educator often had conversations with a student in the fall of a school year, the Educator realized that student had a crush on him. The Educator had conversations with the student that the Educator admitted were "wrong" and "beyond" what was appropriate. During the conversations, the Educator allegedly expressed feeling toward the student, and he allegedly discussed his personal life with the student.	YES	NO
24. The Educator signed a contract to work the school year. In a letter dated less than one month after the school year began, the Respondent resigned due to problems with the child care arrangement for her youngest child.	YES	NO

**APPENDIX D FINAL COPY OF THE
SURVEY OF THE GEORGIA CODE OF ETHICS**

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender: ___ Female ___ Male

II. Directions: By circling yes or no for each statement, please indicate if the following statements below are violations of the standards of the Georgia Code of Ethics. A “yes” response indicates that the statement is a violation and a “no” response indicates that the statement is not a violation.

<p>1. The parents of two of the Educator’s students complained that the Educator abused their children. In one incident, the Educator allegedly picked up a male band member off his feet and pushed or shoved him against something, leaving a bruise on his arm. Additionally, the Educator allegedly yelled at the student and used profanity. In the second incident, the Educator allegedly slapped a female student after she called the Educator by his first name.</p>	YES	NO
<p>2. During the administration of the Stanford 9 Test, the Educator, in the presence of four other Teachers, allegedly discussed test questions on sections of the test which the students had not been tested. Another teacher alleged that the Educator made statements indicating the Educator had looked forward into the test booklets and read some questions for upcoming tests.</p>	YES	NO
<p>3. The Educator allegedly checked the results of the fourth grade standardized tests following the completion of each test and gave feedback to students about their performance. The Educator admitted that she did make notes during the testing, reviewed or “spot checked” the test afterwards, and used the information to determine if the students had tried their best or not.</p>	YES	NO
<p>4. The Educator signed a contract agreeing to teach the school year. The Educator failed to return to work after the Thanksgiving holidays. He did not turn in a letter of resignation nor did he call. The school’s efforts to reach him were unsuccessful. The Educator stated to the PSC investigator that the school was a “hostile environment” and he chose not to return after the holidays.</p>	YES	NO
<p>5. The Educator was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana and methamphetamines. The arrest was not related to school business, nor did it occur on a school campus.</p>	YES	NO
<p>6. Educator admitted to having stolen students’ medication. The school system recorded the Educator entering and going through bottles in the vault where medications were kept.</p>	YES	NO
<p>7. Educator was returning to school after running an errand when a student nearly crashed into the Educator’s car. The student was driving without permission during school hours, with several other student passengers. Educator, shaken and scared at having almost been hit, got out of his car and yelled at the student regarding his driving. He took the student’s keys and told him to meet him at his teacher’s office. The Educator told the student “if you had hit me, I would have whipped your ass.” Educator never made any aggressive motions or moves towards the student.</p>	YES	NO

8. The Educator submitted to drug screening tests that returned positive for controlled substances/drugs. The Educator admitted to using the controlled substance/drug Ecstasy.	YES	NO
9. The Educator signed a contract to teach the school year. One month into the beginning of that school year, the Educator turned in a letter of resignation that stated that she was not cut out for this line of work.	YES	NO
10. The Educator, an alternative school principal, allegedly directed a subordinate to sign as the hearing officer for hearings that the subordinate did not conduct. The Educator admits that he asked the assistant principal to sign the hearing documents as the hearing officer. There was no malice or any attempt to deprive students of their rights. His intent was to speed up the hearing process.	YES	NO
11. The Educator was arrested and charged with two counts of Marijuana Possession. On a separate occasion, the Educator was arrested and found guilty of Drug Trafficking.	YES	NO
12. The Educator signed a contract to teach for the school year. Two to three days into the school year, the Educator left an undated note in his classroom and left the campus and has never returned.	YES	NO
13. Currently, an Educator works as an assistant band director for a Middle School. During the school year it came to the attention of the PSC that the Respondent had an out of state teaching certificate, which on that date was suspended by the Board of Education for that state for three years. The basis of the suspension of the Educator's out of state teaching certificate was violations of school policy relating to the handling of money and inability to account for a shortage of up to \$6900 in funds as well as insubordination.	YES	NO
14. The School District in a county out of state filed a complaint against Educator for an alleged breach of employment contract. The hearing regarding Educator's out of state teaching certificate was held at the beginning of the calendar year. The Educator submitted to Petitioner an application for an upgrade to her Georgia certificate to teach. On application, Respondent answered "no" to the question, "Have you ever surrendered a teaching certificate/credential/license/permit, or had one denied, revoked or suspended, or is any investigation or adverse action now pending against you?" The Educator's out of state certificate to teach was suspended retroactively for breach of contract.	YES	NO
15. The Educator gave a copy of a student's schedule to the custodial parent of that student.	YES	NO
16. The school system alleged that the Educator was intoxicated while at school and was found in possession of a bottle of wine in the classroom.	YES	NO
17. The Educator alleged altered a document and signed the name of her commanding officer in the U. S. Army Reserve. The Educator also allegedly failed to follow the proper procedures for requesting military leave, in violation of the school system's existing policy. The Educator does not deny that she typed out of a separate request for leave and signed her commanding officer's	YES	NO

signature. She stated that this is a common practice in the unit where she serves.		
18. The Educator was arrested and charged with six counts of theft by taking. Four counts were not prosecuted. The Educator was sentenced concurrently for the remaining two counts and received four years confinement and six year's probation.	YES	NO
19. The Educator was arrested but not charged with Public Indecency.	YES	NO
20. The Educator was tested for alcohol after reports were made that the smell of alcohol was detected on the Educator during school hours. The results of the test were positive. This was the third incident during the school year in which the Educator had the smell of alcohol on his person at the school.	YES	NO
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24. The Educator signed a contract to work the school year. In a letter dated less than one month after the school year began, the Respondent resigned due to problems with the child care arrangement for her youngest child.	YES	NO