



Get to Know the Educator License Discipline Team

Overview

The State Board of Education has authority over the issuance, denial, reprimand, suspension, and revocation of preK-12 teacher and administrator licenses and permits as governed by state law and State Board of Education Rule [0520-02-03-.09](#). The SBE Educator License Discipline (ELD) Team supports the work of the Board as it relates to [Educator License Discipline](#). Three (3) attorneys and two (2) paralegals directly handle every case reported to the Board via [TN Compass](#). The work of the ELD team is collaboratively managed by the Deputy General Counsel. There were 911 disciplinary reports made in 2023, which led to 453 open cases.

The ELD team hails from diverse backgrounds, bringing a wealth of experience and passion for the work.

Learn a bit more about each team member in the following pages:

Educator License Discipline Team

P. Danielle Nellis is the Deputy General Counsel. She is a multi-generational Nashville native with an extensive litigation background. A graduate of Boston University School of Law, P. Danielle is regularly amazed by the ELD team's tireless efforts to uphold the standards of professional educators and ensure the safety of students. She is excited to work with the team to ascertain the data necessary to improve workflows and craft outreach efforts to educate and engage education stakeholders.



Todd Madison is the Senior Associate Counsel. He is from Memphis, Tennessee and earned his law degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock - William H. Bowen School of Law. Todd has been with the Board for 4 years and helps to ensure Tennessee continues to uphold a high bar for educator licensure and student safety, furthering the State Board's efforts to ensure that all students have access to great teachers and leaders. He looks forward to continued partnership with stakeholders to help achieve these goals.



Educator License Discipline Team

Alex Anderson is Associate Counsel. He is a native of Carthage, Tennessee and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Alex has served in the active duty Air Force and Tennessee Air National Guard since 2011, and is currently the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the 164th Airlift Wing in Memphis, Tennessee. In his own words, Alex “enjoys the work of the educator license discipline team because of its responsibility to uphold the ethical standards of the education profession, with the student always in mind. I also appreciate the work of the State Board, more broadly, because my father and mother-in-law were career educators in Tennessee public schools and I know that, without public schools, I would not have the life or career that I do.”



Ryan Shanahan is Associate Counsel. A Tennessee native, Ryan attended the University of Tennessee College of Law, where he participated in their advocacy program. Prior to joining the State Board of Education, Ryan served as an attorney at TennCare. In his own words, Ryan shared that he, “enjoy[s] being able to use [his] professional experience to represent the board in ELD matters, ensuring the safety of students throughout Tennessee.”



Educator License Discipline Team

Taylor Bates is one of two paralegals for the State Board's licensure discipline team. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill and a part-time law student at Syracuse University. He believes that a better tomorrow for Tennessee starts with ensuring all students have access to a great education. Taylor shared, "I love that our team gets to collaborate with local school districts in upholding high standards for the teaching profession. I hope that directors across the state will look to our office as a resource as much as we look to them."



Tisa Smith, a native Nashvillian, is one of two paralegals on the SBE ELD team. She received her bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University, and worked as a paralegal at TennCare prior to joining the State Board. Tisa shared, "I enjoy making new connections and working with directors across the state to help Tennessee students. I enjoy the work I do because I have a direct impact on helping to ensure students are educated and nurtured in a safe environment."

To learn more about educator license discipline, please visit our website where you will find additional resources, including reporting resources for Directors of Schools, and the Board Rules and Policies pertaining to educator license discipline. Additionally, if you have further questions, you can contact the ELD Team at EducatorLicense.Discipline@tn.gov.