



Arizona State Board of Education

2018 Enforcement Action Report

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Purpose of the Enforcement Action Report

Arizona has a complex public education system which serves over 1.1 million students¹. School districts, and many charter school networks, require their teachers to be certified. Pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 15-203(A)(14) and 15-203(A)(20) the State Board of Education (Board) is responsible for imposing discipline (Enforcement Actions) on the certificates of educators who have acted with unprofessional or immoral conduct. It is important to note, that the Enforcement Actions in this research only represent the cases that are received and then adjudicated by the Board, and does not include all allegations reported to the Investigative Unit.

In an effort to better understand disciplinary trends occurring in the state of Arizona, Board staff began gathering data on these Enforcement Actions in 2017. For the purpose of this report, instances of unprofessional or immoral conduct are simply defined as ‘misconduct.’ Board staff accumulated cases from January 2012 through the end of 2018 into the Enforcement Action Database (EADB). The total number of cases tracked for this report is 633 (N). Board staff also tracked the source of report, the gender of the respondent, the certificate held by the respondent, Educator Preparation Program (EPP) of the respondent and the category of the case. Analysis of the EADB has revealed several significant trends and the recognition of these trends is an opportunity to focus on areas of misconduct prevention.

State Education Background

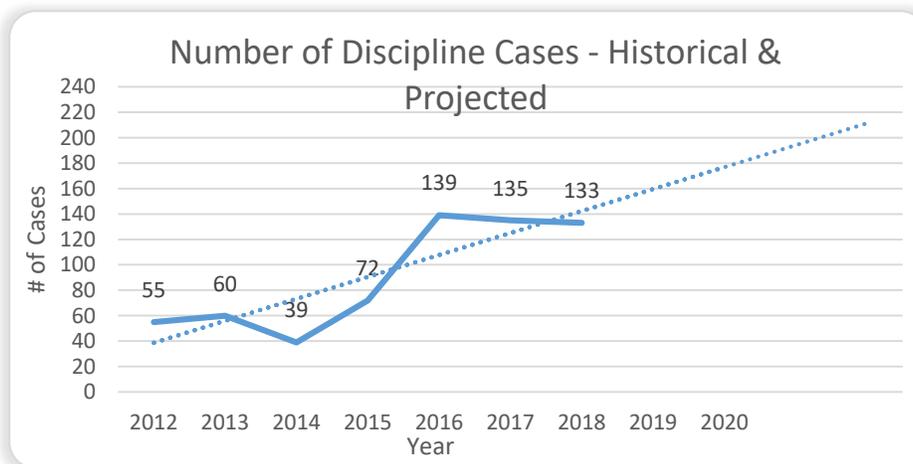
According to the 2016 Annual Report of the Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, Arizona is home to 90,000 certified teachers. Roughly 60,000 certified educators are employed in a district or charter school. Teacher certification has a jurisdiction that spans fifteen counties, more than 200 districts, more than 400 charter holders, and 13 Career and Technical Education Districts. The system is comprised of more than 1.1 million students. Approximately 950,000 of which attend public schools, with the remaining 150,000 attending charter schools¹.

Number of Cases

The EADB tracked retrospective data ranging from 2012 to present. Data collection efforts are ongoing for all new Enforcement Actions imposed by the Board. The EADB tracks overall numbers of Enforcement Actions.

Exhibit 1 depicts the number of cases adjudicated between 2012 and 2018, as well as offers an expected forecast for 2019 and 2020.

Exhibit # 1



As seen in **Exhibit 1**, the number of Enforcement Actions taken in 2012 (55) is a fraction of the number of Enforcement Actions taken in 2018 (133). The difference in these figures represents a 142% increase in instances of Enforcement Actions.

There are a number of explanatory variables which attribute to the massive increase in case load. Some growth should be expected because of the increase in Arizona's population. According to census data from 2012 to 2017, there has been a 7.4% increase in population². It can be inferred that a growing population means more students, which requires more teachers, which contributes to higher levels of misconduct.

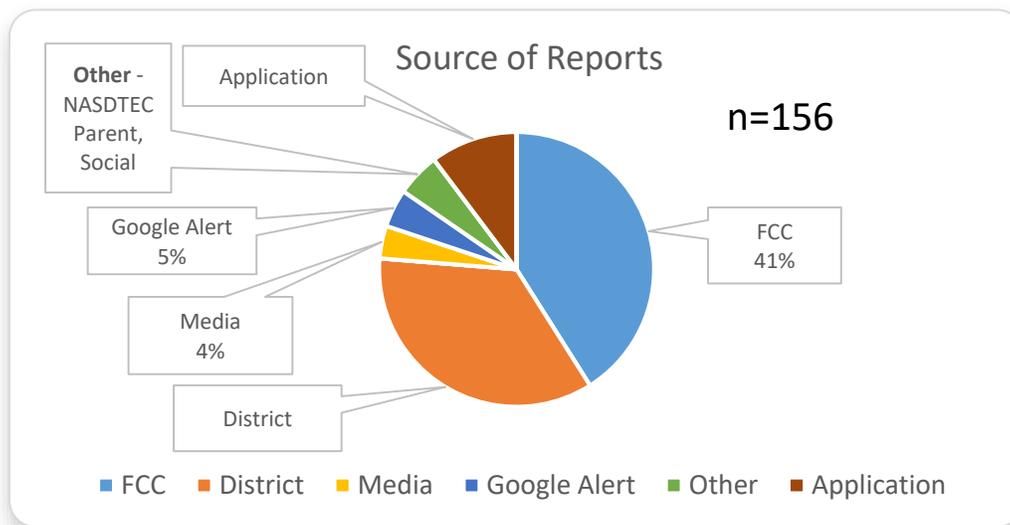
The 95% increase between 2015 and 2016 was due to the processing of a large backlog of cases. The dotted line in **Exhibit 1** shows a positive trend throughout this time frame.

By forecasting, Board staff anticipates an increase of enforcement actions for 2019 (160) and 2020 (178), which is an average annual increase of 15%.

Source of Complaints

Allegations of misconduct are reported to the Department of Education’s Investigative Unit, and then sent to the Board after the case has been investigated. Of the 633 total cases tracked, only 156 of them had a value for “source of report.” **Exhibit 2** displays the results of these findings. The largest source of report is Department of Public Safety – Fingerprint Clearance Card suspension notices (FCC). These FCC notices typically occur as a result of an arrest, and account for 41% of Board adjudicated cases, while school official reporting accounts for 35% of adjudicated cases. The remaining 14% of cases are reported from other sources such as applications for certifications, parents, social media, google alerts, traditional media sources, and National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) database entries.

Exhibit # 2



Gender

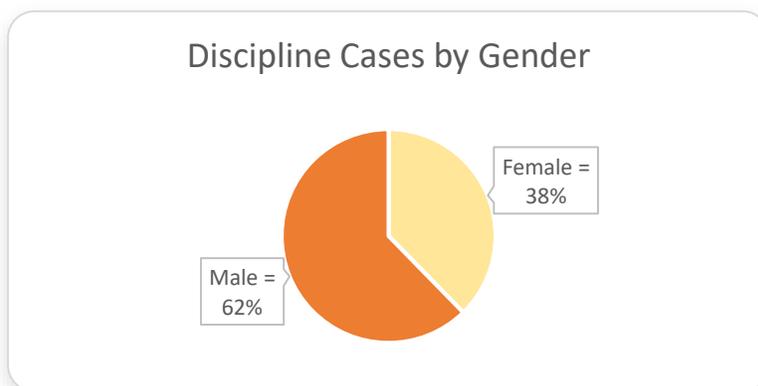
The total number of valid teaching certificates, and their breakdown by gender are seen in **Exhibit 3**. The data shows that the profession is overwhelmingly fulfilled by females, with a figure of 78%. Only 22% of educators in Arizona are male.

Exhibit # 3

All Issued Certs	
Total	94,469
Female	73,148
Male	21,321

However, when looking at **Exhibit 4**, an opposite trend is apparent. 62% of enforcement actions involve a male respondent, while only 38% involve women. This data is seen in **Exhibit 4**.

Exhibit # 4



When analyzing the rate at which misconduct occurred by gender, the raw numbers from **Exhibit 4** were divided into the numbers of **Exhibit 3**. The results of this equation are shown in **Exhibit 5**.

Exhibit # 5

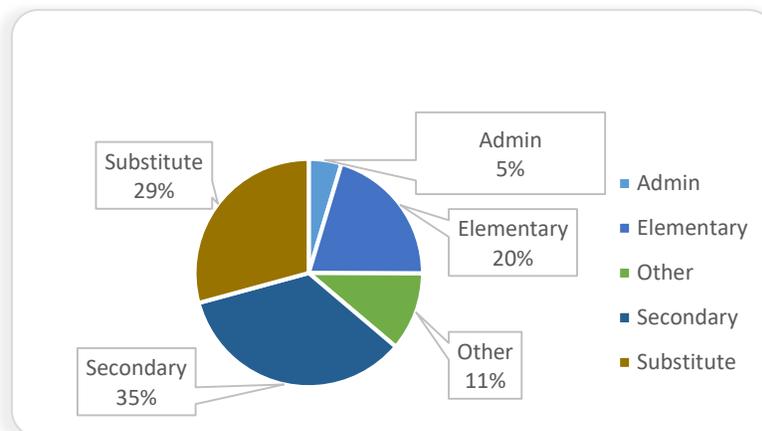
Rate of Discipline	
Female	0.00093 (< 1/10 of 1%)
Male	0.00529 (> than 1/2 of 1%)
Total Rate	0.00623 (> than 3/5 of 1%)

It is important to note that the rate at which teacher misconduct occurs is extremely low. The rate of misconduct during the seven-year time frame shows that only about half of 1% of teachers were disciplined by the Board. The figures from this study indicate that men are nearly six times more likely to commit misconduct than females.

Certificate Type

Certificate type was broken up into 5 different categories as seen in **Exhibit 6**

Exhibit # 6

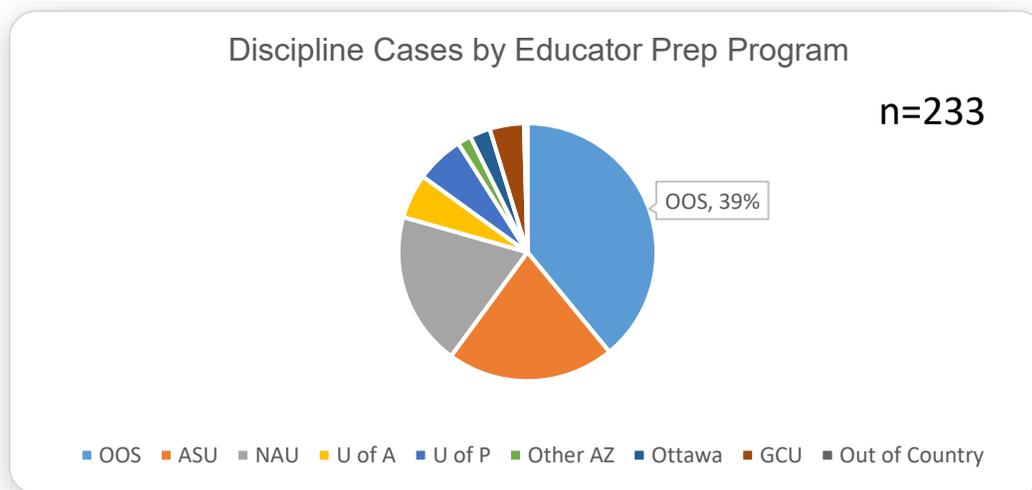


The two largest disciplined groups are educators with Secondary teaching certificates (35%), and educators with Substitute teaching certificates (29%). Educators holding these two types of certifications account for 64% of all misconduct.

Educator Preparation Program

Information was pulled from a sample size of only 233 because Many cases in the database did not have a value for EPP, and consequently, a smaller sample size was garnered. The following categories capture 100% of observations in the sample size. This data is outlined in **Exhibit 7**.

Exhibit # 7



The most noticeable trend in this category is Out of State (OOS) certificate holders. Nearly 40% of all teacher misconduct is happening from someone who had completed their educator prep program in another state and has moved to Arizona to teach.

Category of Misconduct

Complaints fall into five categories: sexual offenses, assault, substance abuse, fraud and breach of contract. The largest share of Enforcement Actions result from sexual misconduct, which accounts for 40% of all Enforcement Actions imposed by the Board. While all categories have increased over time, substance abuse, which accounts for 24% of misconduct, comes in second, and is growing an average annual rate of 3%. The results are represented in **exhibit 8**.

Exhibit # 8

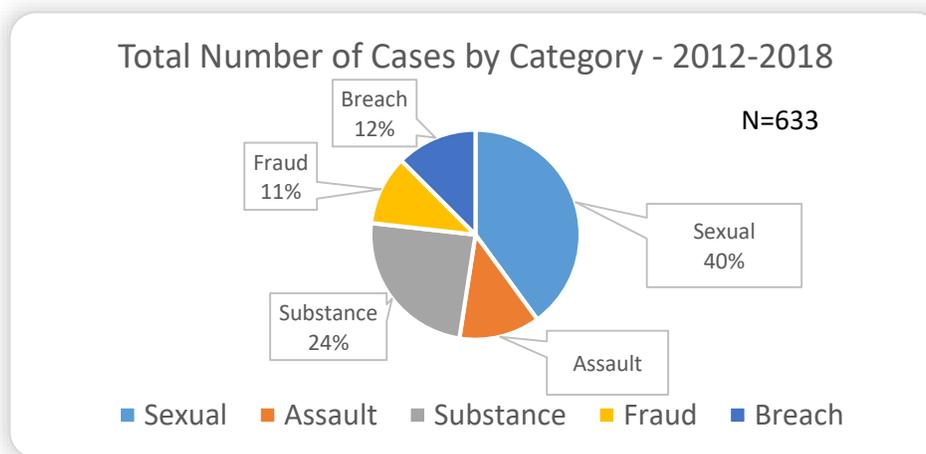
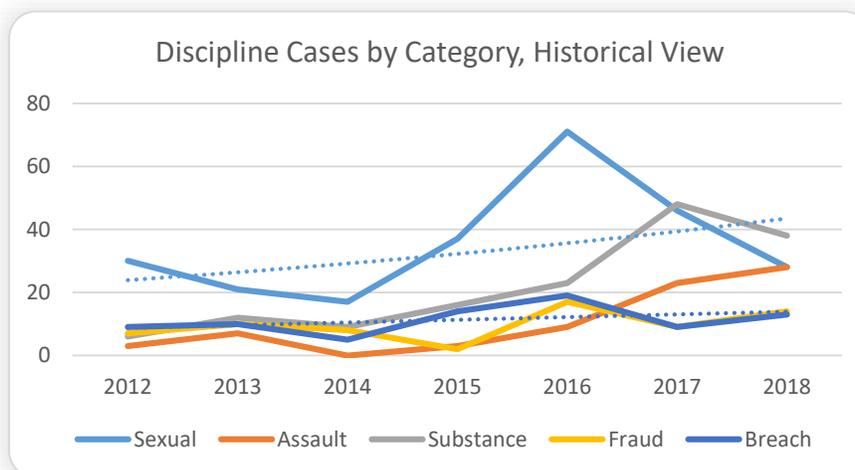


Exhibit 9 shows how each category's numbers have fluctuated over time.

Exhibit # 9



Recommendations

Non-automatic report types, such as, reports from districts, parents, social media and the like, all take place because of intended human intervention. Reports that take place because of human intervention are an invaluable aspect of the disciplinary process, and are always an area for improvement because they do not happen automatically. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 13-620 and A.R.S. § 15-514, school personnel are required to report allegations of child abuse. It is recommended that districts and HR professionals continue to remind educators of this duty to report. Informational handouts detailing the why and when to report, is a great way to increase vigilance in educators and adults to report misconduct

Substitute certificate holders account for the largest share of adjudicated cases of misconduct. While most substitute teachers will go their whole career without ever being disciplined by the Board, the numbers suggest this is an opportunity for misconduct prevention. It is recommended that individuals attaining substitute teaching certification should be required to take ethics training. One example of this would be NASDTEC's Model Code of Ethics course, which addresses professional practices for educators, and is approved by the State Board of Education.

Working with EPP's, Board staff recommends a collaborative effort to address the needs of educators completing a degree from one of our universities and those receiving a certificate through reciprocity. Such an effort could create a focus on professional practices and ethics directly related to actions taken by the Board due to specific types of unprofessional and immoral conduct displayed by Arizona Certified teachers.

Conclusion

The next step in the misconduct prevention process is to continue the data collection efforts, and also determine if there are other useful qualitative characteristics that should be tracked in the EADB. Additional next steps include producing a new report which details how to initiate the recommendations, to begin implementing said recommendations, and to continue analyzing future data to ultimately see how these efforts have affected occurrences of misconduct. Through possible legislative, policy and process changes, the Board can become a preventative force toward misconduct, as opposed to just being the administrative body that imposes discipline.

References

- (1) <https://www.azed.gov/adeinfo/>
- (2) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/206086/resident-population-in-arizona/>