



# STATE OF IOWA

GOVERNOR TERRY E. BRANSTAD  
LT. GOVERNOR KIM REYNOLDS

BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS  
GEORGE J. MAURER, Ed.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 7, 2012

Ms. Monica Rouse  
P. O. Box 942  
Durant, IA 52747

RE: Monica Rouse, Case No. 12-30

Dear Ms. Rouse:

This letter is to notify you that the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners received a complaint that you may be in violation of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics, which could result in disciplinary action against your Iowa license. It has been alleged that you violated:

282-25.3 (1) Iowa Administrative Code Standard I. *Conviction of crimes, sexual or other immoral conduct with or toward a student, and child and dependent adult abuse.* Violation of this standard includes:

a. *Fraud*, Fraud means the same as defined in rule 282-25.2(272).

282-25.3 (3) Iowa Administrative Code Standard III. *Misrepresentation, falsification of information.* Violation of this standard includes:

- b. Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting or omitting information regarding compliance reports submitted to federal, state, and other governmental agencies.
- c. Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting or omitting material information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation.

282-25.3 (6) Iowa Administrative Code Standard VI. *Unethical practice toward other members of the profession, parents, students, and the community.* Violation of this standard includes:

- b. Deliberately suppressing or distorting subject matter for which the educator bears responsibility.
- c. Failing to make reasonable effort to protect the health and safety of the student or creating conditions harmful to student learning.
- d. Conducting professional business in such a way that the practitioner repeatedly exposes students or other practitioners to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- j. Aiding, assisting or abetting an unlicensed person in the completion of acts for which licensure is required.
- m. Failing to comply with federal, state, and local laws applicable to the fulfillment of professional obligations.
- o. Performing services beyond the authorized scope of practice for which the individual is licensed or prepared or performing services without holding a valid license.

282-25.3 (8) Iowa Administrative Code Standard VIII. *Incompetence*. Violation of this standard includes:

- a. Willfully or repeatedly departing from or failing to conform to the minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing educational practice in the state of Iowa.
  - b. Willfully or repeatedly failing to practice with reasonable skill and safety.
- These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 272.2(1) "a."

The specific allegation is:

See enclosed complaint for details of the allegations made by complainant.

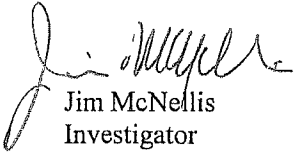
The Board of Educational Examiners is concerned about this alleged conduct and has initiated an investigation. As part of this investigation, you are entitled to present your version of the facts surrounding this matter, any reasons or justification for your actions, or any other comments you care to offer before a decision is made concerning whether any formal disciplinary action needs to be taken against your teaching license. While the information you submit may assist the Board in reviewing the allegations, you are not legally required to submit a response to the Board. If you choose not to respond, the Board will base its decision whether or not to pursue action against you on the information available.

If the allegations against you can be substantiated, the Board may elect to take action against your teaching license. The Board is authorized to suspend or revoke teaching licenses pursuant to 282—11.33(272) Iowa Administrative Code. The Board may also impose other sanctions short of revocation or suspension, if warranted.

Any information that you submit to the Board is classified as private data pursuant to 282—11.4(9) Iowa Administrative Code. The information that you provide will be given to the Board for review and to determine probable cause for a hearing. The information that you provide could be used in a contested case hearing and, if admitted into evidence, could become public data.

I am requesting a written response to the allegations contained in this letter. If you are represented by counsel in this matter, your attorney may submit a response on your behalf. If no response is received from either you or your attorney within twenty (20) days of the date of this letter, I will assume you do not wish to contribute a written response to the investigation.

Sincerely,



Jim McNellis  
Investigator

Encl: Complaint and Chapters 11, 25 IAC

State of Iowa  
BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0147  
(515) 281-5849

RECEIVED  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS

MAR 02 2012

**ORIGINAL**

BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS

Durant Community School District )

Board of Education )

COMPLAINANT,

and

Monica Rouse )

RESPONDENT.

CASE No. 12-30  
(Assigned by the Board)

**COMPLAINT**

*Please check one of the following categories for the complainant:*

\*Complainants shall be:

- ☐ a. Licensed practitioners employed by a school district or their educational entity or their recognized local or state professional organization.
- ☒ b. Local boards of education.
- ☐ c. Parents or guardians of students involved in the alleged complaint.
- ☐ d. Executive Director, Board of Educational Examiners.
- ☐ e. The Department of Transportation, if the licensee holds a behind-the-wheel instructor's certification issued by the department and the complaint relates to an incident or incidents arising during the course of driver's education instruction.

The above named Complainant(s), for complaint against the Respondent(s), states the following:

**1. Information on the Respondent:**

- (a) Respondent's Name: Monica Ruth Rouse
- (b) Respondent's Position: 9-12 Principal (8/09/1999 - 9/17/2009)
- (c) Respondent's School: Durant Community School District
- (d) Respondent's Street Address: P.O. Box 942
- (e) Respondent's City, State & Zip Code: Durant, IA 52747
- (f) Respondent's Telephone Number: 563-249-4703
- (g) Respondent's Folder Number (if known): 236969
- (h) Respondent's Social Security Number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

2. On or about 8/07--9/09, the respondent violated standard(s) of professional ethics and practices as defined by IAC 282 Chapter 25.

Provide a concise statement with the facts, which clearly and accurately apprise the Respondent of the alleged violation of professional ethics and practice: (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

See attachment A Finding of Fact & Conclusion of Law as drafted by  
Cam Davidson (School Board Attorney) in regards to termination of  
contract of Monica Rouse. See corresponding attachments of ten  
students identified by numbers and not by their actual names.

3. CITE THE SPECIFIC SECTION(S) OF THE STATUTES OR RULES ALLEGEDLY VIOLATED AND THE NATURE OF THE VIOLATION. See the enclosed rules of professional practice and ethics: Chapters 25 and 26 (282-25 and 282-26) (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

See attachment B.

4. **The Complainant** hereby requests the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners to investigate this complaint. If the investigation suggests probable cause, the Complainant further requests the Board to hold a hearing thereon in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 272, as amended, and its Rules and Regulations issued thereunder, and further requests the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners to take such action as is warranted by the facts as determined by such an investigation and hearing within the purview of said statutes.

Dated this 29 day of February, 2012.

**COMPLAINANT(S)**

Duane Bennett  
(Signature)

By Duane Bennett, Superintendent & Board Members  
(Name and Title or Position) of Durant School  
listed below

408 7th St., Durant, IA 52747

(Address)

563-785-4432

(Telephone Number with Area Code)

Joel Meincke  
Rm. Porter  
Ron Allen  
Jim Taylor  
Barbara Haener

**ITEM #3 - CITE THE SPECIFIC SECTION(S) OF THE STATUTES OR RULES  
ALLEGEDLY VIOLATED AND THE NATURE OF THE VIOLATION.**

1. Code #282-25.3(1)a – Fraud. In the “Finding of Fact” documentation provided above, numerous situations are noted where Ms. Rouse knowingly and intentionally provided false information and made false representations regarding awarding credits for courses not actually completed by students, changing of a grade without the staff members knowledge, awarding grades for courses she apparently supervised and served as the teacher where she clearly is not licensed or endorsed, awarded diplomas arbitrarily to students who had not met all graduation requirements, and falsely represented herself when she attempted to obtain background information on the superintendent from his previous school district in Wisconsin.

In awarding credit for courses not actually completed by students, Ms. Rouse was acting in a fraudulent manner by clearly providing false information to the student(s) involved, her direct supervisor (the superintendent), and the school board. Ms. Rouse admitted at the adjudicator's hearing that she lied to the superintendent in his investigation about who actually awarded a course grade which she then awarded a credit which was subsequently used by her to award a diploma for student #1. In addition, with student #1, she directed the guidance counselor to add two courses to a student's transcript which were never taken after Ms. Rouse had already awarded the student a diploma which was not earned.

Ms. Rouse did admit in her testimony that she changed a grade (student #10) without informing the teacher or the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team of this particular special education student.

The evidence is very clear that Ms. Rouse assumed the role of the teacher and created independent study courses in several subject areas where she was not properly licensed or endorsed. With the information pertaining to student #1, Ms. Rouse taught courses through independent student work in literature, economics, government, and physical education. Ms. Rouse was not licensed or endorsed to teach economics, government, and physical education. In court testimony (reference attachment C – pages 930-932), Mr. Rouse admits to conducting/teaching an independent economics course to at least two different students (students #1 & #3). Again, Ms. Rouse is not licensed to teach economics. This was a blatant disregard for licensing requirements (i.e. someone teaching a course who has never been licensed or endorsed to teach a particular course) when one of her most significant responsibilities as a principal is to ensure only properly licensed staff members are teaching in their assigned areas.

With the information submitted in the “Finding of Facts” for the school board hearing, it is clearly evident that several students during the period of August 2007 through September 2009 were fraudulently awarded high school diplomas when these students clearly had not earned sufficient credits to meet the requirements

of the Durant Community School District. It is clear that these diplomas were not awarded merely from some "oversight" or unintentional mistake, but rather, the school district's requirements for graduation credits were intentionally ignored. The very foundation and integrity of all school districts is based on the practice of awarding of a diploma which inequitably means a student achieved at a certain level and demonstrated proficiencies entitling a person to a diploma. All future education institutions, all future employers, etc. rely on the integrity of a high school diploma. Ms. Rouse has placed the creditability of the Durant Community School District in question by her blatant disregard of this professional trust and fraudulently recommending students for diplomas when she knowingly disregarded the requirements set forth for graduation requirements by the Board of Education.

As noted above, Ms. Rouse also falsely represented herself when she attempted to obtain background information on the superintendent from his previous school district in Wisconsin (reference court testimony labeled as attachment C to this complaint – pages 116-117). A portion of the definition for "fraud" as contained in Iowa Administrative Code 282-25.2(272) Definitions states: "knowingly providing false information or representations in connection with the discharge of duties." By Ms. Rouse's own admission, she did falsely use someone else's name in attempting to gather information on the former superintendent.

2. Code 282 – 25.3(3) – Standard III – misrepresentation, falsification of information.

Subsection b. Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting, or omitting material information, regarding compliance reports submitted to federal, state, and other governmental agencies.

Ms. Rouse knowingly recommended students to receive a Durant diploma to the superintendent and school board who had not achieved sufficient credits to earn a diploma. In addition, she certified several students to the Department of Education as graduates who had not achieved sufficient credits to be deemed graduates. Additional information for these numerous violations is provided in the "Findings of Facts and Conclusion of Law" for students #1 - #10. Summative copies (identified by student numbers corresponding to students #1 - #10) showing the credits that these students were lacking to earn a diploma including the student transcripts are attached to the "Findings of Facts and Conclusion of Law" enclosed.

Subsection c. Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting or omitting material information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation.

It will be clear to the reader of this complaint when reviewing the information contained in the "Findings of Fact" that there are several admissions of lying, misrepresenting the facts, or omitting the facts during the investigations conducted by Mr. Duane Bark for many of the students as identified as #1 - #10. Please note on the top of page 17 of the "Findings of Fact," it states that "Ms. Rouse admitted to

illegal conduct by teaching outside of her licensure, admitted she lied regarding Durant students, and provided misinformation to justify her actions.”

3. Code #282 – 25.3(6) Standard VI – Unethical practice towards other members of the profession, parents, students, and the community.

Subsection b. Deliberately suppressing or distorting subject matter for which the educator bears responsibility.

As noted in the above sections, Ms. Rouse in the “Findings of Fact” admitted to lying and/or misstating facts regarding the issues of awarding credits not earned, changing a grade(s), and amending transcripts to allow for student credits not earned. As stated in Code 282 -25.1(272) Scope of Standards, “the adherence to certain professional and ethical standards is essential to maintaining the integrity of the education profession.” It is clear that Ms. Rouse willfully lied (and she has admitted to lying at various times) to the superintendent in his investigation of the allegations pertaining to students graduating without sufficient credits, amending student transcripts, etc. Ms. Rouse has essentially violated the core of maintaining integrity in her professional responsibilities as an educational leader.

Subsection c. Failing to make reasonable effort to protect the health and safety of the student or creating conditions harmful to student learning.

Ms. Rouse failed to respond to a mother who had complained that her daughter was sexually harassed by a fellow student. There is no record of any investigation of the complaint. Please reference student #11 in the “Findings of Fact” report.

Subsection d. Conducting professional business in such a way that the practitioner repeatedly exposes students or other practitioners to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.

When the issue of Ms. Rouse awarding diplomas not actually earned started to become evident, it has become very embarrassing and concerning for the students involved. Other students were increasingly becoming upset and concerned that some students were earning diplomas when they heard these students may not have met all of the requirements like all other students. It has since become well known that one student earned a diploma who was actually never officially enrolled in the district or hardly ever attended any days of school in the entire 2007-08 school year (please reference student #1). The issue of awarding a diploma not actually earned was not just limited to one student, but actually involved several students during this two year period.

Subsection j. Aiding, assisting, or abetting an unlicensed person in the completion of acts for which licensure is required.

In this unique situation, the person (Ms. Rouse) who was aiding, assisting, or

abetting an unlicensed person in the completion of acts for which licensure is required was actually herself. As stated above, Ms. Rouse has admitted in court testimony and in the "Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law" (documents which are attached to this complaint) that she in fact served as the teacher for several courses where she was not properly licensed. Ms. Rouse, who is responsible for ensuring licensed teachers are only assigned to particular courses for which they are properly certified, did indeed intentionally and repeatedly willfully disregard her professional obligation.

Subsection m. Failing to comply with federal, state, and local laws applicable to the fulfillment of professional obligations.

Evidence shows that Ms. Rouse clearly circumvented the IEP process by waiving a math credit (.5 credit) for one student (student #6). She had informed the guidance counselor that the .5 math credit had been waived by the IEP team, and there would be an examination in lieu of taking a viable math class (please reference student #6). From documentation, it appears the IEP may actually have never been held, and Ms. Rouse just simply bypassed any examination and certified the student could receive a diploma. In reviewing the records, the student was actually 1.0 credit short in math or the equivalent of a year-long course or two semester courses. This situation is a violation of federal and state special education requirements.

In addition, student #10 was a special education student receiving services under an IEP. Ms. Rouse admitted to changing this student's final grade in American History from an F to a D- at the end of the spring semester 2009. She made the change without informing or obtaining the agreement of the IEP team. Ms. Rouse also waived a physical education credit for this student. The IEP had not agreed to waive this requirement.

Subsection o. Performing services beyond the authorized scope of practice for which the individual is licensed or prepared or performing services without holding a valid license.

Evidence clearly shows and Ms. Rouse has admitted to teaching classes for which she had no endorsement or teaching license in these curricular areas (reference students #1, #3, and #4). Principals and superintendents are held professionally responsible for ensuring all teachers are properly endorsed or hold temporary certificates in all areas that they are assigned to teach. In these particular situations, the superintendent was not aware that Ms. Rouse was unilaterally sanctioning these courses and serving as the official teacher of record for these students. In her role as principal, Ms. Rouse was certainly aware of the statutory requirements to have only properly endorsed teachers serve in all curricular areas. As evidence demonstrates, Ms. Rouse assumed the role of teacher for these students in courses she was clearly not certified or endorsed to teach. She did this with either the full knowledge that she was violating licensure requirements or clearly should have known she was in clear violation.



4. Code #282 – 25.3(8) – Standard VIII – incompetence.

Subsection a. Willfully or repeatedly departing from or failing to conform to the minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing educational practice in the state of Iowa.

As noted above and in the "Findings of Fact," Ms. Rouse did willfully and repeatedly fail to perform one of her most vital roles as a building principal – the validating of student transcripts to ensure all students who received a Durant Community School District diploma did meet all of the graduation requirements of our district as established by the Board of Education. For example, during the graduation ceremony in May 2009, she publicly introduced the students on stage indicating these students had met all graduation requirements; when, in fact, five (5) students received diplomas that day who had not met the graduation requirements of the Durant Community School District. She also certified these students to the Department of Education as graduates of the school district. As clearly shown above, Ms. Rouse was willfully violating one of her most sacred trusts as a high school principal, in that, she had full knowledge that several of the students she recommended for graduation and did actually receive diplomas, did indeed not have sufficient credits to have received a Durant Community School District diploma. In addition, she later actually had one diploma hand-typed and given to the student. This student (student #1) was substantially short of the required credits needed for graduation, and there is even the question as to whether the student was actually even ever officially enrolled in our school district.

In addition, when Ms. Rouse was escorted from the school in September 2009, she was instructed that she was not to return to the school, or at a minimum, she was not to be in the building without checking in at the office. Ms. Rouse has repeatedly ignored this school directive. In March 2010, Ms. Rouse became aware that a petition was being circulated among current staff members indicating they could not support Ms. Rouse perhaps being reinstated as principal. When she became aware of this petition, she charged into the school yelling, screaming, and demanding to see this petition. A number of staff members felt very threatened and were concerned for their well-being. These actions demonstrate a total disregard for the safety and well-being for other professional educators which is an expectation for any educational leader and/or building principal.

Subsection b. Willfully or repeatedly failing to practice with reasonable skill and safety.

As stated above, Ms. Rouse willfully and repeatedly failed to practice with reasonable skill by ignoring the reality that several students' transcripts showed that they were somewhat or substantially short of the required credits to earn a Durant Community School District diploma. She also did not use reasonable skill by assuming the role of teacher in several different curricular areas for which she was not currently or never was properly licensed to teach in these areas.