

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

DECEMBER 12, 2024

9:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS:

DR. SARAH MOORE, Chair
MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE-ROLLINS, Vice Chair
MS. LISA HUNTER
MR. KEN BRAGG
MS. LEIGH KEENER
MR. RANDY HENDERSON
MS. ADRIENNE WOODS
MR. JEFF WOOD
DR. GARY ARNOLD

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. JACOB OLIVA, ADE Secretary
MS. STACY SMITH, Deputy Commissioner
MR. BEAU McCASTLAIN, Arkansas Teacher of the Year
MS. HOPE WORSHAM, Assistant Commissioner - Public School
Accountability
MS. KARLI SARACINI, Assistant Commissioner - Educator
Effectiveness and Licensure

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. WHITNEY JAMES, Managing Attorney - Professional
Licensure Standards Board

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

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1: MOUNTAINBURG WAIVER REQUEST FOR STANDARD 1-A.5 (CLASS
SIZE)

First, we have the Mountainburg School District request for a waiver.

MS. WORSHAM: No, they are here in person.

CHAIR MOORE: Oh, great.

MS. WORSHAM: Yes.

CHAIR MOORE: Thank you, Superintendent Atwell.

MS. WORSHAM: Well, good morning. Hope Worsham, assistant commissioner, public school accountability for the Department.

I am here to request a -- present a waiver for standard 1-A.5 which is class size for the Mountainburg School District. They are requesting this for one year. The district did receive this same waiver last year for one year and are back this year requesting the same waiver. Superintendent Atwell is here to answer any questions that you may

1 have regarding their request.

2 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

3 Superintendent, would you like to make your
4 remarks? We appreciate you coming in today.

5 SUPT. ATWELL: You're welcome. I appreciate
6 your consideration in this manner.

7 We want to welcome and accept any school choice
8 or transfer request we get, but in a small district
9 it's hard to upstaff whenever our enrollment goes
10 over a threshold. And so, with 52 students in 3rd
11 grade in two sections, we feel that it's in the best
12 interest of the students to avoid disruption. And we
13 would have much difficulty in affording and staffing
14 a position at this point in the year, so I appreciate
15 your consideration.

16 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

17 Board Members, I'll go to my right first and ask
18 for questions. Questions? To my left questions?

19 MS. HUNTER: I have a question.

20 So this is the second year in a row that you're
21 requesting a one-year waiver. Is -- was last year's
22 for the same cohort of students? I mean, are we just
23 following them along?

24 SUPT. ATWELL: No, ma'am. Last year's was third
25 grade also, so those students are in the 4th grade

1 now.

2 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

3 SUPT. ATWELL: And our numbers were at 48 at the
4 end of the year. And through the enrollment and
5 transfer request process, we ended at 52 and we've
6 held at that number this year.

7 MS. HUNTER: So I also wonder about the timing
8 of this, you know. And I understand that it would be
9 difficult to make a hire at this point in the school
10 year, but are we kind of like off -- off cycle in
11 some way as far as looking at this need? Like,
12 should we be talking about this in the summertime
13 rather than in December? Does that make sense? I
14 guess not.

15 MR. WOOD: No, it does.

16 MS. WORSHAM: So I can address. The school can
17 request the waiver at any time period.

18 MS. HUNTER: Sue.

19 MS. WORSHAM: And so we are always monitoring
20 enrollment and when enrollments fluctuation --
21 fluctuate. So I believe that the overage -- from our
22 side -- the first time we noticed it was in
23 September.

24 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

25 MS. WORSHAM: Which was after the school year

1 started, and that's whenever Superintendent Atwell
2 reached out to us with questions about requesting a
3 waiver. But the district can request the waiver at
4 any point throughout the school year. We did change
5 the standards so that enrollment has to be based on
6 -- we check for ensuring that you're meeting the
7 class size requirements as of the October 1
8 enrollment, so that they can better plan and maybe
9 not have to have so many waivers throughout the year.

10 MS. HUNTER: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Worsham, may I ask you a
12 question while you're here? It was unclear to me, is
13 this a standards waiver request or what we would
14 formally call an ACT 1240 waiver request?

15 MS. WORSHAM: So it is a standards waiver
16 request.

17 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

18 MS. WORSHAM: It's for that one particular
19 standard, and for the time period of one year.

20 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

21 MS. WORSHAM: Yes.

22 CHAIR MOORE: And we've done this before for
23 class size?

24 MS. WORSHAM: That is correct.

25 CHAIR MOORE: Why this type versus the Act 1240

1 waiver?

2 MS. WORSHAM: There are different requirements
3 for Act 1240 waivers, one of them being the length of
4 time that they're being requested for.

5 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

6 MS. WORSHAM: And because these -- we would
7 anticipate that schools are able to staff
8 accordingly, those have -- these have always been
9 one-year waivers --

10 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

11 MS. WORSHAM: -- for that reason. It's just for
12 the period of time to ensure that we can get staffing
13 figured out and then maybe better plan for the next
14 year.

15 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

16 Board Members? Ms. Hunter? Questions, Mr.
17 Wood?

18 MR. WOOD: Are the teachers okay with this?

19 SUPT. ATWELL: Yes, sir. We have a building
20 guiding coalition that meets and reviews and they
21 look at staffing recommendations. And I met with the
22 teachers in question, and they felt like what they do
23 for 25, they can do for 26.

24 MR. WOOD: Sure.

25 SUPT. ATWELL: And it would be more disruptive

1 to have those classes split and changed at this
2 point.

3 MR. WOOD: Are the teachers offered more
4 compensation?

5 SUPT. ATWELL: Not at this time.

6 MR. WOOD: Okay. Well, I would encourage you to
7 do that in my opinion.

8 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Keener? Dr. Arnold,
9 questions? Questions to my right?

10 MR. HENDERSON: No.

11 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry, Ms.
12 Woods, questions? Apologize I didn't get to you.

13 With that, no more remarks?

14 (NO RESPONSE)

15 CHAIR MOORE: With that, then, if no more
16 questions, the floor will be open for a motion.

17 MS. HUNTER: So I'll move to approve the waiver.

18 CHAIR MOORE: There is a move to approve the
19 waiver. Is there a second?

20 DR. ARNOLD: Second.

21 CHAIR MOORE: There is a second. Any questions
22 or comments?

23 (NO RESPONSE)

24 CHAIR MOORE: All right. All in favor, say aye.

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUSE OF AYES)

1 CHAIR MOORE: Motion passes.

2 MS. WORSHAM: Thank you.

3 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you. And thank you again
4 for coming in today.

5 **2: CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL**
6 **LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD FOR CASE 24-166 - ABIGAIL JONES**

7 CHAIR MOORE: Next, we will have Ms. James for a
8 PLSB case that we have today.

9 MS. JAMES: Good morning, Whitney James with the
10 Department.

11 This case is one that was on the consent agenda
12 last month that was pulled for a review. We sent
13 notice of today's review hearing to the educator and
14 her attorney, and her attorney has indicated that
15 neither she nor the attorney plan to appear today in
16 person. So typically we would swear in the educator,
17 anybody speaking on her behalf that's not an
18 attorney. Since she is not here, I can give you a
19 quick overview of this case.

20 This was an educator who was working as an
21 intern or pre-service teacher at the Bismarck School
22 District. She admitted that she exchanged in the --
23 that she exchanged inappropriate photographs with a
24 student via text message. Again, she was a
25 pre-service teacher at the time which is what brought

1 her under the PLSB umbrella. The student was 18 at
2 the time the photographs were exchanged. The
3 educator had Code of Ethics training in August of
4 2023, and the exchange of photographs happened in
5 November of 2023. There were no criminal charges
6 filed that we're aware of because the student was 18
7 and I don't -- we don't have any evidence that there
8 was actual physical contact. And there was no true
9 finding from DHS. The educator did self-report her
10 actions and the exchange of photographs to her
11 administrator after she received a threat from her
12 boyfriend. If you don't tell them, I will type of
13 thing.

14 The recommendation from the Ethics Subcommittee
15 was a Level 3 Public Notification of ethics violation
16 which is the equivalent of suspension of license for
17 three years. Followed by a Level 2 Public
18 Notification which is the equivalent of probation for
19 two years, a \$500 fine, training, reading, written
20 reflections and quarterly reports. The educator
21 requested an evidentiary hearing and then withdrew
22 that request to accept the recommendation of the
23 Ethics Subcommittee. It went on the consent agenda
24 and then you all voted to pull it last month.

25 Any questions?

1 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you, Ms. James. Can you
2 remind us, so even though the educator is not here,
3 we will still have to take a vote today?

4 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIR MOORE: What is -- And this is where we
6 take three separate votes; correct?

7 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

8 CHAIR MOORE: Can you walk us through those
9 three?

10 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am, absolutely.

11 CHAIR MOORE: And then, we'll open up for
12 discussion.

13 MS. JAMES: So there will be three separate
14 motions. The first one being: did the educator
15 violate the Code of Ethics? And if the educator did
16 violate the Code of Ethics, what are the standards?
17 And this one we're talking about Standards 1 and 2.
18 If the Code of Ethics was violated, we'll need a
19 motion to accept or modify the recommendation of the
20 Ethics Subcommittee. And then you will state what
21 you wish for the sanction to be. And then the third
22 motion is regarding the rationale. You can use the
23 rationale of the Ethics Subcommittee or provide your
24 own rationale. And I have that here if you'd like a
25 refresher on what their rationale was. They did

1 recommend the equivalent of suspension, so if you
2 chose to modify the sanction, you might want to also
3 modify the rationale. It's up to you.

4 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

5 We'll start with questions --

6 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

7 CHAIR MOORE: -- and then can get to that.

8 Mr. Henderson? Mr. Bragg, questions?

9 MR. HENDERSON: Not at the moment.

10 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

11 Ms. Rollins, questions?

12 VICE CHAIR ROLLINS: Can you explain to us what
13 happens with a public notification?

14 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. That would be public in
15 AEELS, and it would show suspension or revocation in
16 AEELS.

17 VICE CHAIR ROLLINS: Okay. I'm not aware of
18 what that is.

19 MS. JAMES: In the Arkansas Educator Licensure
20 System, so anyone that looked up her name in that
21 system would see that she has a sanction. Also, of
22 course, we would have a State Board order on our
23 website.

24 MS. SARACINI: Karli Saracini.

25 Just so you know, before a district hires, they

1 are -- it's in statute that they look within our
2 system, and it will have a banner in red that says
3 suspension or probation. And so it's very evident
4 when you go to hire someone, and they look it up in
5 our system and that's something that they are to do
6 by law.

7 VICE CHAIR ROLLINS: So that -- that'll be up
8 for three years; is that --

9 MS. JAMES: If there is -- if the recommendation
10 is suspension, that will be up for three years and
11 then there will be probation after that. So it'll be
12 up for a minimum of five years if you accept the
13 previous recommendation. Additionally, she will not
14 be eligible to work in a school in any capacity while
15 on suspension.

16 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Hunter, questions?

17 MS. HUNTER: So I always get confused on this.
18 What about other states if she chose to attempt to
19 work in another state?

20 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. They would be able to
21 see through NASDTEC that she has a suspension in
22 Arkansas. Assuming that you want to accept the
23 recommendation, you're always -- you're free to
24 modify the recommendation. But either way, whatever
25 it is, if there's a sanction, other states would be

1 able to see that.

2 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

3 CHAIR MOORE: More questions? Mr. Wood,
4 questions?

5 MR. WOOD: How old was she when she --

6 MS. JAMES: Early 20s. Early 20s. The student
7 was 18. She was completing her internship at the
8 time that this occurred.

9 MR. WOOD: He was a senior, I suppose?

10 MS. JAMES: He was the senior, yes.

11 MR. WOOD: And what were the natures of the --
12 what was the nature the photographs?

13 MS. JAMES: Nude photographs.

14 MR. WOOD: Okay.

15 MS. JAMES: The student -- my understanding is
16 that the student approached her, and they started
17 texting and talking and then they exchanged nude
18 photographs. Each of them sent nude photographs.

19 MR. WOOD: No more questions.

20 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Keener?

21 MS. KEENER: So the recommendation from the
22 subcommittee -- I'm reading it right now and I want
23 to make sure I get it right --

24 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. KEENER: -- was suspension or --

1 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. The equivalent of
2 suspension. She doesn't have a license, so we would
3 call it Level 3 Public Notification. Yes, ma'am.

4 MS. KEENER: So without a license, I guess, what
5 are you suspending? Her ability to be counted in
6 ratios or tell me --

7 MS. SARACINI: We're suspending that she cannot
8 work in a public school or charter.

9 MS. KEENER: Okay. As opposed to -- there's
10 nothing to revoke, so that's --

11 MS. SARACINI: And if she doesn't meet the
12 criteria that's set forth, all of the fines and
13 everything that the subcommittee put forth, she will
14 never be able to get her license till that is
15 complete.

16 MS. KEENER: So this is such a unique situation
17 because --

18 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

19 MS. KEENER: -- if this were -- these were two
20 adults in -- somewhere in society outside of this
21 power dynamic, we wouldn't be having this discussion.
22 But because that dynamic was there and these
23 standards, I believe, were violated. We'll vote on
24 it in a minute. But it is -- I still feel it's our
25 duty to protect children that she could potentially

1 interact with at a later date. And so, I guess, I'm
2 not sure that -- can we block something from getting
3 a future license? You see what I mean? There's
4 nothing to revoke, so I wanted to know what is
5 perhaps a more severe statement that we could make as
6 a Board that this was unacceptable without -- does
7 that make sense?

8 MS. SARACINI: You would have to do the level
9 that's this equivalent of revocation.

10 MS. KEENER: Okay. Which is --

11 MS. SARACINI: Number 4.

12 MS. KEENER: Okay. Okay.

13 MS. JAMES: Yes, if she --

14 MS. KEENER: That's helpful.

15 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. If she had a Level 4
16 Public Notification, she would not be able to get her
17 license for at -- right. She would not be able to
18 get -- she would not be able to get her license.

19 MS. HUNTER: So she just becomes ineligible,
20 like --

21 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. HUNTER: -- indefinitely?

23 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. KEENER: And can you tell me a little bit
25 more about the rationale of the committee that

1 decided on 3 as opposed to 4 when --

2 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. So they did find that
3 she violated Standards 1 and 2. They have listed
4 that she was in her internship. Of course, they
5 exchanged nude photographs. The student was 18 years
6 old. They thought that there was a low negative
7 impact on the student and that was based on what the
8 parent had told the district that we're fine with it.
9 He's a grown boy and we don't want to participate in
10 the investigation or have anything to do with this.
11 No evidence of physical contact. The interactions
12 lasted one month. The parent of the student was not
13 concerned regarding the interactions. The educator
14 self-reported to her supervisor and took ownership of
15 her actions. And then she knew -- or sorry. She
16 should have known her actions violated the Code of
17 Ethics. She had just had the Code of Ethics training
18 in August.

19 MS. KEENER: So I guess the thing that I keep
20 coming back to is the very clear sanctioning
21 guidelines. That had this been a licensed educator,
22 regardless of age -- based on their -- the understood
23 relationship between a teacher and a student -- it
24 would be revocation. I mean, that's as clear as day.
25 So, I guess, when I'm leaning towards is that -- let

1 me get my notes -- that we -- that we vote that
2 Standards 1 and 2 were violated. That we would
3 modify it to that Level 4 with the rationale of just
4 simply the guidelines that are here. That would be
5 my thought.

6 DR. ARNOLD: Dr. Keener addressed my questions
7 and concern and summarized what I was hoping to
8 accomplish as well.

9 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

10 Ms. Woods, questions by you?

11 Thank you, Dr. Arnold.

12 Okay.

13 MS. HUNTER: Can I ask a --

14 CHAIR MOORE: Yeah, certainly.

15 MS. HUNTER: So did you say that this exchange
16 happened for one month? It wasn't a one-time thing?

17 MS. JAMES: It was more than one text message.
18 And I don't -- I don't believe it lasted -- it -- the
19 relationship in total probably lasted about one
20 month. I don't really know how long. We didn't have
21 the text messages. She did admit that she exchanged
22 them, but there were multiple text messages.

23 CHAIR MOORE: May I ask questions on that? So
24 sometimes we do get the text messages. Why were they
25 not received in the case?

1 MS. JAMES: I -- I am not sure. I don't know if
2 they had been deleted by the time that she --

3 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

4 MS. JAMES: -- that she came forward to the
5 school. But she did -- she did self-report. But her
6 -- her romantic partner or -- I don't know if it was
7 her boyfriend -- found out about the text messages
8 and told her you know you -- if you don't report
9 this, you know, there, you know, there will be a
10 consequence. And at that point, she came forward.
11 They likely were deleted. And again, you know, the
12 student's parents did not want to cooperate or
13 provide anything.

14 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

15 MS. SARACINI: DHS didn't accept it.

16 MS. JAMES: Yes. And DHS did not pick this up
17 because he was 18 and there wasn't any evidence of a
18 physical relationship.

19 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. But without text messages,
20 there's a vacuum of information.

21 More questions, Board Members?

22 MS. KEENER: One other thing I'm concerned with
23 is the absence of their presence today, either her or
24 her lawyer. Was there a rationale given? Just -- I
25 suppose did they reach out and go, we're not

1 interested? Or, you know, what was the exchange
2 like?

3 MS. JAMES: We did send the hearing notice, and
4 we reached out just for our purposes to find out, you
5 know, is she going to appear just so we're prepared.
6 And her attorney responded that they did not plan to
7 appear.

8 MS. KEENER: Okay. That says a lot.

9 CHAIR MOORE: Mr. Henderson.

10 MR. HENDERSON: Yeah.

11 Just to clarify, with regards to the
12 recommendations, we're talking three years or five?
13 Because I'm looking at my notes here --

14 MS. JAMES: It would be three years of the
15 equivalent of suspension followed by two years of the
16 equivalent of probation for the Subcommittee's
17 recommendation. If it is a Level -- if you vote to
18 give a Level 4 Public Notification, that's the
19 equivalent of a permanent revocation. She would not
20 be able to get her license --

21 MR. HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

22 MS. JAMES: -- or work in a public school or
23 charter.

24 CHAIR MOORE: Any more questions or comments?
25 Ms. Woods, I'll check in with you again. Okay.

1 MR. BRAGG: I have a question.

2 CHAIR MOORE: Mr. Bragg.

3 MR. BRAGG: According to the timeline, she went
4 through ethics training in August and then this
5 occurred not long after that?

6 MS. JAMES: Yes. Our office provided ethics
7 training to her class at the university in August.

8 MR. BRAGG: Are there specific instances in
9 ethics training? Or is it -- I just don't understand
10 how somebody could go through ethics training --

11 MS. JAMES: One of our investigators was at that
12 training and she said that they spent over an hour on
13 Standard 1 and inappropriate interactions with
14 students.

15 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

16 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Saracini.

17 MS. SARACINI: I would like to address that we
18 are flipping our -- redoing our training because I
19 don't think that one time is enough, that it needs to
20 be embedded in the program. So as we are making
21 tweaks to our state review for our ed prep programs,
22 we're now going to put that part in our state review
23 as one of the standards. And that -- we can pull
24 data to look to see investigations from which -- EPP
25 because it needs to be embedded and not just a one

1 time and you're done because that's what we're
2 seeing. And we just met last week, brainstormed and
3 hopefully we will be able to update you in the next
4 month or two and reveal what our training will be and
5 what the expectations would be in our ed prep
6 programs. Because, again, I think one and done is
7 not enough, and that's what we're seeing

8 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

9 CHAIR MOORE: Questions, for Ms. Saracini?

10 MS. HUNTER: So with respect to ethics training,
11 I mean, in the ed prep program, they go through that
12 before they enter a -- ever enter a classroom; is
13 that correct?

14 MS. SARACINI: That is correct.

15 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

16 MS. SARACINI: They are supposed to. But,
17 again, as we are evolving with our state review and
18 our science of reading audits, we're looking under
19 the hood and we're really seeing some trends --

20 MS. HUNTER: Right.

21 MS. SARACINI: -- that we haven't. And so we
22 have gone through 13 -- the -- over the past year and
23 this is where we're seeing what we need to change at
24 our level to ensure our students are safe and our
25 candidates are fully aware of what they need to go in

1 day one ready. Because I feel that with social media
2 and all the devices, we are learning that times are
3 different -- when I went through versus what's now.
4 And so I know that we need to change as well and
5 that's what we're seeing. And we hope to provide
6 those guidelines and those resources for them to use
7 throughout and not just have us come and do a
8 training. It really needs to be embedded within
9 their courses -- in appropriate places within their
10 courses.

11 MS. HUNTER: Agree. And I'll say too, not that
12 this is defensible in any way --

13 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

14 MS. HUNTER: -- shape or form, but, you know, it
15 has -- it can be a little confusing, I guess, for
16 those candidates because they too are still students.
17 And -- but -- in this setting they are someone who is
18 of authority and so they have to recognize that they
19 are transitioning also in their roles.

20 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

21 MS. HUNTER: So I -- no -- I don't understand
22 it. But I do understand that particular dynamic, so
23 thank you for that.

24 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

25 CHAIR MOORE: May I ask one more question? The

1 PLSB sanctioning guidelines, I know these are just
2 guidelines and they're not hard --

3 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIR MOORE: -- are these public?

5 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIR MOORE: And are these shared with
7 educators during any sort of training?

8 MS. JAMES: They are public. And, I mean, I
9 know that our office always -- when we've done
10 training, we always go over those. And yes, they are
11 shared.

12 CHAIR MOORE: Okay.

13 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

15 Board Members, any further questions or
16 comments?

17 MR. McCASTLAIN: I just want to clarify, had
18 this been a fully certified teacher, same actions, it
19 would be Level 4; correct?

20 MS. JAMES: If they had a license, it would be
21 revocation.

22 MR. McCASTLAIN: Okay.

23 MS. JAMES: Yes. We would call it revocation.

24 MS. KEENER: I think Secretary Oliva and I spoke
25 about this off topic a while ago and he said, you

1 know, in his training they looked at specific
2 scenarios; and this is one of those perfect scenarios
3 that needs to be embedded in that training because it
4 is such a -- it's an odd thing where we come -- I
5 believe we need to come firmly and DHS is, like,
6 well, you didn't violate anything. But our standards
7 are very different, and the situation is very
8 different. So hoping that we can add specific
9 scenarios. This might be the perfect one, and recent
10 enough that it's relevant.

11 MS. JAMES: Yes.

12 MS. SARACINI: And we just had a full board
13 meeting on Friday and we discussed really looking at
14 the sanctions and really going through that process;
15 and we had rich discussion. And I know in the
16 Subcommittee -- I don't sit on that, but I know
17 Whitney and her team -- they worked with them as well
18 because we want more clarity and more consistency.

19 MS. JAMES: Yes. And I will add that in the
20 training she received, it was clarified that Code of
21 Ethics applies to you when you're an intern.

22 MR. WOOD: I find it shocking -- even
23 considering her status as a college student and his
24 status as an 18-year-old senior in high school -- I
25 find it shocking that it would have to be told to her

1 that that is inappropriate. I support the most
2 strenuous penalty that we can impose to prevent her
3 from being a teacher in the future only because this
4 is such a demonstration of lack of judgment; and I
5 don't -- I just don't think that we can trust her in
6 Arkansas public classrooms in the future. You know,
7 I hope that she learns from this and recovers from it
8 and has a fantastic career as a high-upstanding
9 individual in another field, but I think we have to
10 protect our classrooms from people like this. And I
11 think that there needs to be a strong message to even
12 college students who are looking forward to a future
13 career in education that there is a broad separation
14 in the relationship with the students that you teach,
15 and that separation is growing. You know, we are
16 expecting even further distance in the relationship
17 between teacher and student maybe then was expected
18 20 years ago. And so I hope that the culture of the
19 classroom for future educators will be all kinds of
20 hands off, stay all kinds of away and just keep
21 things extremely high-level professional to prevent
22 stuff like this from happening.

23 MS. JAMES: Yes, Sir.

24 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Keener?

25 MS. KEENER: Okay. So I'll make a motion that

1 we affirm that this educator violated Standards 1 and
2 2.

3 MS. KEENER: Okay. There's a motion by Ms.
4 Keener. And remember, there will be a set of three
5 motions. The first is that Standards 1 and 2 were
6 violated. Is there a second?

7 MS. HUNTER: Second.

8 CHAIR MOORE: A second by Ms. Hunter.
9 Any questions or comments?

10 (NO RESPONSE)

11 All in favor, say aye, aye.

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIR MOORE: Any opposed?

14 Okay. Motion passes.

15 MS. KEENER: So I'll make a motion that we
16 modify the recommendations of the PLSB Board.

17 Is that correct?

18 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. And to what?

19 MS. KEENER: Oh, okay. I'm sorry. Modify and
20 we wish it to be a Level 4 --

21 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. There's a --

22 MS. KEENER: Public notice; is that what it --
23 sorry.

24 CHAIR MOORE: There's a motion by Ms. Keener to
25 modify the sanction to be a Level 4 Public

1 Notification.

2 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIR MOORE: Is there a second?

4 VICE CHAIR ROLLINS: Second.

5 MS. HUNTER: Second.

6 CHAIR MOORE: A second by Ms. Rollins.

7 Questions or comments?

8 (NO RESPONSE)

9 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. All in favor, say aye.

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIR MOORE: Any opposed?

12 Okay. Motion passes.

13 And third motion is rationale.

14 MS. KEENER: And I'll make a motion that we find
15 the rationale to be based on the PLSB sanctioning
16 guidelines that it was confirmed that there was
17 communication about sexual relationships, sexual
18 pictures and planning a relationship after the
19 student graduates.

20 CHAIR MOORE: There's a motion by Ms. Keener
21 with the rationale. Is there a second?

22 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

23 CHAIR MOORE: A second by Mr. Henderson.

24 Any questions or comments?

25 (NO RESPONSE)

1 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. All in favor, say aye.

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIR MOORE: Any opposed?

4 Okay. Motion passes.

5 MS. JAMES: Just to clarify, is that in addition
6 to the previous rationale, or is that a new
7 rationale?

8 MS. KEENER: Well, the rationale that was given
9 were reasons that it shouldn't be Level 4, so I've
10 modified it using Level 4 to explain the reasoning
11 that it should be; is that --

12 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. So we will --

13 MS. KEENER: So I guess it's --

14 MS. JAMES: -- make that a new rationale.

15 DR. ARNOLD: It's a replacement.

16 MS. KEENER: -- replacement?

17 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. KEENER: Thank you.

19 MS. JAMES: Thank you.

20 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you, Ms. James. We
21 appreciate the work you and your team do. We hope to
22 not have to see you. No offense, but these are --

23 MS. JAMES: Can't make any promises.

24 CHAIR MOORE: -- these are difficult, but
25 appreciate also the training that you are working on

1 --

2 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIR MOORE: -- to go out to teachers so that
4 we see incidents like this few and farther between.

5 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIR MOORE: Thank you.

7 MS. JAMES: Thank you so much.

8 **3: 2025 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING DATES**

9 CHAIR MOORE: Ms. Smith, you are here to present
10 us with the 2025 meeting dates.

11 MS. SMITH: Y'all have taken it really easy on
12 me today. I'm telling -- you kept a short meeting
13 for me, everything.

14 Stacy Smith, deputy commissioner.

15 Presenting today dates for the State Board
16 meetings -- of Education -- in the future. It was
17 based off of the calendar of -- previous -- second
18 Thursday of each month. So if there was to be a
19 special board meeting or special work session, those
20 could be included as you move forward.

21 CHAIR MOORE: Any questions, Board members, to
22 my right? To my left?

23 (NO RESPONSE)

24 CHAIR MOORE: Okay. With that, the floor will
25 be open for a motion.

1 MR. BRAGG: I move we approve the meeting dates.

2 CHAIR MOORE: A motion by Mr. Bragg to approve
3 the meeting dates. Is there a second?

4 MS. HUNTER: Second.

5 CHAIR MOORE: A second by Ms. Hunter.

6 All in favor, say aye.

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIR MOORE: Any opposed?

9 Motion passes.

10 With that, that's the end of our action agenda.

11 (The Action Agenda was concluded at 9:43 a.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)

) ss

COUNTY OF PULASKI)

I, Miranda McEntire, Certified Court Reporter #852, do hereby certify that the facts stated by me in the caption on the foregoing proceedings are true; and that the foregoing proceedings were reported verbatim through the use of the voice-writing method and thereafter transcribed by me or under my direct supervision to the best of my ability, taken at the time and place set out on the caption hereto.

I FURTHER CERTIFY, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested or otherwise, in the outcome of this action, and that I have no contract with the parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original deposition transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial attorney, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties in the action.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 7th day of January, 2024.



MIRANDA MCENTIRE, CCR

Certified Court Reporter #852

