

**Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB)**  
**Friday, December 1, 2017**  
**PLSB Full Board Minutes**

A meeting of the Professional Licensure Standards Board was held in the Professional Licensure Standards Board Conference Room at #4 Capitol Mall, Room 105-C, Little Rock, Arkansas on December 1, 2017. Members of the board present were Ms. Kathy Howell, Chair; voting members: Dr. Shelly Albritton, Ms. Brenda Brown, Ms. Lynne Gronseth, Dr. Victoria Groves-Scott, Ms. Lillian Hemphill, Mr. John D. Keeling, Dr. Donny Lee, Jr., Dr. Andrea Martin, Dr. Zaidy MohdZain, Dr. Greg Murry, Ms. Cindy Romeo, Mr. Scott Shirey, and Mr. Dudley Webb, III; ADE staff members in attendance were Eric James Paula Thurmond, Cheri Rolett, Daryl Taylor, Stephanie Johnson, Sarah Banker, Shannon Rostad-Hall, Shari Misener, Matthew Newcomb, Joan Luneau, Dr. Jeremy Owoh, and Cheryl Reinhart.

- 1. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Ms. Kathy Howell, Chair at 8:05 a.m.
- 2. Approval of Minutes** – Kathy Howell, Chair  
Motion made by Dr. Zaidy Mohdzain to approve the September 1, 2017, minutes; seconded by Dr. Andrea Martin. Ms. Brenda Brown was present at the December 1, 2017, PLSB Full Board meeting but her name was inadvertently left off the attendance. This has been corrected and the minutes were approved by a unanimous vote on March 2, 2018.
- 3. Action Agenda** - Joan Luneau

- a. Approve Guidelines for Professional Educator Ethics Training (per Act 564)

Ms. Luneau stated that in 2017, a law was passed requiring ethics training for provisional licensure through an alternative educator preparation program.

Ms. Luneau handed out the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) brochure template from the National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics (NASDTEC). This brochure serves as a guide for future and current educators faced with the complexities of P-12 education. The code

establishes principles for ethical best practice, mindfulness, self-reflection and decision-making, setting the groundwork for self-regulation and self-accountability. The establishment of this professional code of ethics by educators for educators honors the public trust and upholds the dignity of the profession.

The five principles addressed in this brochure are:

- I. Responsibility to the Profession
- II. Responsibility for Professional Competence
- III. Responsibility to Students
- IV. Responsibility to the School Community
- V. Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology

Ms. Luneau discussed the Professional Educator Training Guidelines for approval of proposed training programs.

Part I: Criteria for Ethics Training (Class on Ethics, ProEthica, etc. 5 or 6 hours of training)

1. Provide a general description of the training two to three paragraphs in length.
2. Provide all course/modules descriptions, time necessary to complete each course/module, and mode of delivery for all courses/modules prescribed in the proposed training.
3. Provide curriculum matrices that show alignment of the program's prescribed professional education courses/modules and experiences with the Arkansas Code of Ethics and, if applicable, the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE).
4. Describe how mastery of knowledge and skills are assessed throughout the training.
  - Provide samples of the methods/assessments and their scoring rubrics.
  - Explain how data from the assessments will be collected and used for training improvement.

Part 2: Criteria for Ethics Training: Arkansas Specific (2 hours of training), the documentation and the Code of Ethics brochure.

1. Describe how the Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators is included in the training.
2. If applicable, describe how mastery of knowledge and skills are assessed throughout the training.
  - Provide samples of the methods/assessments and their scoring rubrics.
  - Explain how data from the assessments will be collected and used for training improvement.

Dr. MohdZain commented on adding this procedure in addition to the application, and that some educators go straight into the classroom before completing the ethics training. He also asked what the timeline would be as to when this training had to be completed. Ms. Luneau responded to Dr. MohdZain that the training would go into effect in the fall of 2018.

Ms. Hemphill added that the applicant/educator be held accountable for taking the training in a controlled setting.

Ms. Reinhart commented on the question asked: Who provides the Ark. Code of Ethics training? Her response was that Eric James, PLSB Chief Investigator and his team of investigators has been approved to do the Code of Ethics training using the new training video. Ms. Reinhart also stated that there was a possibility this would be used for the Arkansas specific qualification. Ms. Reinhart suggested that Mr. James do a webinar to have interactive conversation or have the candidates come to the PLSB office for the training.

A motion was made by Dr. Martin, seconded by Ms. Baker to approve the Professional Educator Ethics Training Guidelines, Part I and II. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Presentation of ProEthica – Approval - Kathy Pruner, Client Services representing Arkansas and Jessica Stern, Program Director for ProEthica

Ms. Stern presented the online training for the Model Code of Ethics by showing a video. Ms. Stern discussed how to use the model code and understanding it for the school districts. The model was built around the idea that educators are a vulnerable population which is the purpose for the

program. A video scenario was presented to the board on why the Model Code of Ethics is important for educators.

The video was about how far an educator should go to support a student outside of the classroom. Ethical decision making is how to navigate and make smart decisions that may not be included in the Code of Ethics. ProEthica is trying to tie into the Code of Ethics to work together as a whole and helping educators to be able to support students without breaking the Code of Ethics.

ProEthica is an online and self-guided training using instructional modules and videos. ProEthica has built-in checks at the end of each module to ensure that they are able to pass the test. After the second attempt, they are automatically moved to the next step. The videos have closed captioned capability.

There are two versions of ProEthica. One is for pre-service and induction. That version has been expanded into a professional development program which can be used for all teachers. The latter is a three-year program with extended learning materials to drive discussion.

There was a new module added which came out in June 2017 which makes a total of seven learning modules for the teacher version. There is also a leadership module available.

The state of Delaware is using the ProEthica module in their school districts and in their preparation programs. All new teachers are required to take this program and any teachers new to the state of Delaware. They have received positive reports and how it can be expanded.

There was discussion on the different states that are currently using the ProEthica training. Arkansas is currently using this module. Some of the districts using the ProEthica training is North Little Rock, Little Rock School Districts, Forrest City School District, and Liberty School District. ETS is currently working with Pulaski County Special School District to use the school leader version and the school district version.

Ms. Howell asked for a motion to approve ProEthica as one of the options for Part 1 of the PLSB Code of Ethics training. A motion was made by Mr. Shirey, seconded by Mr. Webb. Motion passed unanimously.

A ten minute break was taken at 9:30 a.m. The meeting resumed at 9:40 a.m.

#### **4. Discussion and Reports**

##### **a. Rules Update – Cheryl Reinhart**

##### **i. (Proposed) Rules Governing Educator Licensure – Educator Career Continuum update/discussion**

There were a few licensure rules that have been out for public comment. As a result of these being out for public comment there are a few changes to be made. After these changes are made, they will go back out for public comment. Some of the changes that were made for Career Continuum the word “tier” was removed. Also added within the Career Continuum that the qualifications and requirements will be appended to those rules once they’re final. Once we have those final qualifications they will go through the rule accommodation process. They are working on these and made good progress but they are not ready yet.

Teacher Residency programs - They will be approved by the State per through use of our protocols. The requirements for residency programs will also be added to the rules. Public comments were heard and addressed. The Governor has to review the changes first then they will go out for public comment in March.

##### **Code of Ethics rules -**

Ms. Reinhart said the Code of Ethics rules have been out for public comment and most of those comments were technical changes. There was a decision made to change to these rules to align with the rules of the Ethics Subcommittee on some of their procedures. The use of the term “Reasonable Belief” with the PLSB has been limited to the authorization for investigation. The Ethics Subcommittee’s initial determination should be based on a “Preponderance of

Evidence.” This will be reflected in the rules. The changes are substantive enough to go back to the Governor.

Ms. Howell commented that the board had received a matrix in the past with the changes in rules and asked Ms. Reinhart about receiving a list of the changes in the rules for the PLSB Ethics Subcommittee. Ms. Reinhart said she could email the subcommittee a revision list after the Governor approves it.

a. Statistical Ethical Data Report – Eric James, Chief Investigator

Mr. James told the board that he typically gives them a quarterly update to them on the statistics and current data on the standards. He will continue to do that, but at this stage in their investigations since July 2017 there are certain standards that have yet to be violated. He will explain more on what the investigative arm of the PLSB does. With all the new members, he felt it appropriate to explain this more in depth. PLSB has a three prong system which he showed in a trident form. The three parameters are as follows:

- The Proactive Approach is the main approach and the backbone of what is done by the PLSB. This approach is typically a lot of the research and collection of data and also creation of ethics training and the research appropriate to professional development trainings and books recommended by the subcommittee as far as sanctions go. We are forming a library of training for educators to partake in training to suffice some of the requirements about the sanctions recommended. In addition, the PLSB is constantly producing training presentations and training information and the research is produced from the data the PLSB collects.
- The Reactive Approach: PLSB Ethics subcommittee, Evidentiary Hearing Committee, Investigations, SBOE
- The Rehabilitation Approach: Professional educator training voted on by the Ethics Subcommittee.

The data shared is last year's data. PLSB investigated 165 cases and received 238 allegations. At the end of the year, the 2017 - 2018 data will be updated and provided to you at the March 2, 2018 meeting.

Despite the negativity on the news and what is on social media, what the PLSB does is less than one percent in the State of Arkansas.

The new Code of Ethics training video has had over 5000 views on the PLSB training video on the ADE website. Mr. James asked the question to the board, "What is the median age of Arkansas educators who are currently and/or have been under investigation since August 2017? The median age of an educator is 45.5 years old. Most people assume it to be the younger teachers, but in all reality it is not.

Mr. James discussed developing training on child sexual assault. There is a current wave of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct claims by businesses. There are a lot of school districts in bigger cities that are conducting risk management assessments in their schools. Universities are conducting risk management assessments as well. Mr. James asked the board to look at doing this at their schools and look at how they are training their staff and what they are doing for the students. The need is there to teach the student as well as the staff what is appropriate and what isn't appropriate. There is a need to tighten the reins on doing a better job of screening when hiring educators to prevent prior offenders from getting jobs at different school districts.

Mr. James provided a look at the grooming matrix that was developed for in-house use. It is not intended for the public. The investigators are using this matrix as a guideline while conducting their investigations to document if the educator under investigation is leaning towards grooming behavior with a student. Ms. Hemphill asked if a similar matrix would be created for the school districts. Mr. James said that this would probably not be done, but information and guidance could be given to steer them in the right direction. Mr. James suggested that they partner with the school counselor to also help guide the students in the right directions and how to handle the situation should it occur.

Mr. James reported that as of July 10, 2017, there have been fifty-six allegations received and forty cases authorized for investigation. Seven out of forty allegations were parent complaints, which is eighteen percent of what is seen by PLSB. School personnel submitted the other thirty-three cases that were authorized. Dr. Murry asked Mr. James to define school personnel. School personnel is anyone in the school district that has filed a complaint other than a parent. The majority of complaints filed are by administrators.

Mr. James introduced the investigators to the board, which included Ashton Middleton as the newest member to PLSB.

Dr. Murry asked the question: Is it an ethical violation for an administrator who has sexually assaulted another administrator and/or other personnel in the school or district? Mr. James first said it would be a violation of the personnel policy within the district and it would also be considered a Title IX violation. Mr. James indicated to Dr. Murry that this has not been addressed by the PLSB as part of their Code of Ethics and standards in the past. Dr. Martin commented that if it affects the decision making of an educator in the school then maybe it should be addressed by the PLSB.

Mr. Webb commented that the parents should be advised that the district is the first to handle the situation before a parent files a complaint with the PLSB. The problem could be a personnel issue or a grievance issue that could be handled within the district. Mr. Webb brought up the possibility that a Standard 9 could be created and clearly defined that this is an educator versus an educator violation.

Ms. Howell talked about the standards focusing on teacher/student relationships. The standards are more geared toward the educator and their profession and how they are as an educator and dealing with the students in the classroom, not the personal aspect of the educator towards another educator.

- b. Preschool Initiatives Update – Tonya Williams – not present
- c. Educator Preparation Programs



i. CAEP site visits report – Joan Luneau

Ms. Luneau talked about CAEP, which is identifying strengths and weaknesses with programs and working towards continuous progress. CAEP site visits are implemented to verify rules and regulations every seven years, and to work on areas of weaknesses, areas for improvement, or stipulations put in place. There are five standards that have to be met to meet initial licensure programs. Sites that were visited in the spring of 2017 were Lyon College – accredited with areas of improvement until 2024; UA of Fort Smith – accredited until fall of 2024 with no areas for improvement; and OBU – accredited until the fall of 2023 with areas of improvement. The team is there for support and is made up of peers from other institutions with three 3 members, one CAEP member, and one state member.

CAEP is taking adverse action of these visits. There are schools that have lost their accreditation and chosen not to pursue CAEP for licensing. There are three visits scheduled for the spring of 2018 to Henderson State, John Brown University, and Southern Arkansas University. The CAEP update for the programs that have advanced standards or graduate level programs has been changed to self-study support in 2019 and will be accountable for the advanced standards.

ii. 2020 Leadership Preparation Programs Report – Joan Luneau

The rules for leadership prep programs will be redone in the areas of building level administrator, district level administrator, and curriculum program administrator. The reason is because of new national standards that have already come out. The PSCL standards have been adopted by the State of Arkansas as guidance for school leaders. ADE is working towards creating an Arkansas version student focused education. By the fall of 2020, all programs for leadership must submit new programs. A whole new complete approval process will be created. The rules state that it will be a rigorous admission of requirements for standards, focus on partnerships with school districts, and insuring that they are site based and in-person interaction throughout the program. The

working group will come up with the guidelines to meet the language. There is a new ETS assessment and the new SLLA assessment is coming out. The CAEP conference is in Kansas City in March 2018. Ms. Luneau and Michael Rowland will be attending.

iii. EPP Quality Reports Working Group Report – Dr. Jeremy Owoh

Dr. Owoh gave a quick update on the working group that met Oct. 30 on criteria for educator preparation program quality reports. We will continue that discussion in January 2018 to have a draft plan available in March 2018 for review. The goal is to finalize criteria by spring 2018 for the EPP quality reports.

d. ESSA Draft- Cheryl Reinhart

The ESSA draft plan has been submitted to the Governor. USDOE is reviewing it and ADE expects to hear from them and respond to them by the end of December 2017. ADE's ESSA plan on educator effectiveness is being recognized as one of the best for ESSA plans for Educator Effectiveness.

e. Budget Committee – Lisa Baker

PLSB is currently breaking even on expenditures. The revenue and expenditures are about the same. PLSB is looking at adding a new attorney to do the background checks. PLSB is also looking to add an investigator position and an additional vehicle and raising pay from a 1% to 4% increase based on a yearly merit increase. As fines are raised and incurred this will add additional revenue. Ms. Howell said regarding the budget, as the law changed as to who receives the lifetime license and who receives them. They are free of charge but cost a lot to produce. There is an aging teaching force who will qualify for the lifetime license, which means less revenue as well.

Dr. MohdZain asked about IAG audits and the costs. Dr. Scott mentioned that Ms. Luneau does not have the staff or capability to do the evaluations, collecting documents, and using the money from PLSB to hire an additional PLSB staff member to help with this task.

Dr. Owoh mentioned he spoke with Dr. Servidio about what it would look like and they both agreed that he would not need a quality report in his annual EPPR report. There was discussion on what it would look like to combine the both reports into one report and the necessary resources they would need to do this. Dr. MohdZain said an annual audit is legally mandated.

## **5. Other Business**

Ms. Howell asked Dr. Owoh if his group had made the determinations as to what they need as far as personnel. Dr. Owoh said his group would like to finalize the draft plan and bring it back to the full board. The major decisions for the EPP quality report will be brought to the board for review.

The next meeting will be on Friday, March 2, 2018, at 8:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned.