

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN RE THE MATTER OF:

THOMAS THRASH

JUNE 11, 2020

PLSB CASE NO. 19-182

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on June 11, 2020, the Arkansas State Board of Education (Board) accepted the recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee (Ethics Subcommittee) for disciplinary action against the teaching license of Thomas Thrash (Educator Thrash). Based upon Educator Thrash's acceptance of the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and the evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, Ark. Code Ann. 25-15-101 et seq., the Board hereby states as follows:

I. Findings of Fact

- a. The Arkansas Department of Education issued Educator Thrash a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2015, valid until December 31, 2019.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Thrash violated the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators promulgated pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-17-422 and 6-17-428.
- c. On June 5, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Thrash violated Standard 1: an educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom and Standard 2: an educator maintains competence regarding his or her professional practice, inclusive of professional and ethical behavior, skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities relating to his or her organizational position.

- d. Educator Thrash was notified on June 5, 2019, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on December 5, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Thrash:
- Allowed inappropriate behaviors by students.
 - Exhibited an inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
1. One Year Probation;
 2. Fine of \$200 fine (due within 90 days of State Board order).
 3. Recommend training, coursework or rehab treatment, with monitored progress:
 - (i) ERC19048: Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB): The Code of Ethics Training Video (2018); Credit Hours: 1
 - (ii) Title: Addressing Appropriate and Inappropriate Teacher-Student Relationships: A Secondary Education Professional Development Model; Author: Ernest J. Zarra, III, Kern High School District; Publication: CLEARvoz Journal Vol. 3, No. 2 (2016); Length: 15 Pages; Link:
<http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/article/viewFile/26/29>
 - (iii) Title: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning – Classroom Practices for Student Success, Grades K-12 (2nd Edition) (280p); Author: Shell Education, Sharroky Hollie; ISBN-10: 1425817319; ISBN-13: 978-1425817312

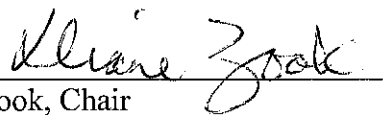
(iv) Title: Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice (384p); Author: Geneva Gay; ISBN-10: 0807758760; ISBN-13: 978-0807758762

4. Written Reflection indicating how these books and trainings will impact his professional practices; and all costs to be paid by the Educator.
5. On December 9, 2019, Educator Thrash was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by first class and certified mail. Educator Thrash accepted the recommendation of the Ethics Subcommittee letter sent via first class and certified mail, via email on January 6, 2020.
6. At today's meeting the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and supporting documentation were presented to the Board as part of its consent agenda.

II. Conclusions of Law

- a. Upon consideration of the evidence presented at the meeting, Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, 6-17-401, 6-17-422, 6-17-428 and 25-15-201 et seq., and the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators, the Board adopts the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendations, and enacts the sanctions accordingly. The Board admonishes Educator Thrash for his violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Thrash is cautioned that further violations of the Code of Ethics or failure to pay the fine may result in more severe discipline including permanent revocation or non-issuance of a license.
- c. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Thrash professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane Zook", written over a horizontal line.

Diane Zook, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education