

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN RE THE MATTER OF:

STEVEN RIESER

JUNE 11, 2020

PLSB CASE NO. 20-074

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 Steven Rieser (Educator Rieser). Based upon Educator Rieser'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 Rieser a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2016, valid until December 31, 2020.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Rieser 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 December 5, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Rieser violated Standard 1: an educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom, 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 Rieser was notified on December 5, 2019 of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on May 1, 2020 the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Rieser:
- Exhibited inappropriate interactions with a student.
 - Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student.
 - Exhibited inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
1. Permanent Revocation of License or Non-Renewal by State Board of Education
 2. Fine of \$500.
 3. All costs to be paid by the educator.
- g. On May 1, 2020, Educator Rieser was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by first class and certified mail. Educator Rieser did not respond to the recommendation of the Ethics Subcommittee letter sent via first class and certified mail.
- h. Per Rule 12.03 of the Code of Ethics Governing Arkansas Educators, if an Educator fails to respond to notification of the initial determination and recommendation of the Ethics Subcommittee within thirty calendar days, the initial recommendation will become a final recommendation without an evidentiary hearing and will be forwarded to the State Board for a final decision.
- i. 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 Rieser for his violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Rieser is cautioned that further violations of the Code of Ethics or failure to pay the fine may result in more severe discipline.
- c. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Rieser professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Diane Zook, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education