

**THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:  
HANNAH EMERSON  
JUNE 11, 2020**

**PLSB CASE NO. 20-115**

**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 Hannah Emerson (Educator Emerson). Based upon Educator Emerson'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 Emerson a standard five-year teaching license on June 16, 2016, valid until December 31, 2020.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Emerson 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 March 6, 2020, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Emerson 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 and

Standard 8: An educator, while on school premises or at school-sponsored activities involving students, refrains from using, possessing and/or being under the influence of alcohol or unauthorized drugs/substances and/or possessing items prohibited by law, possessing or using tobacco or tobacco-related products, e-cigarettes, e-liquid, or vapor products, or abusing/misusing prescription medications or other authorized substances as evidenced by impairment.

- d. Educator Emerson was notified on March 9, 2020, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on April 3, 2020 the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1,2, and 8 in that Educator Emerson:
  - Exhibited inappropriate interactions with students.
  - Exhibited an inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
  - Failed to follow school district/state/federal policies
  - Possessed alcohol while at school
  - Was under the influence of alcohol and/or unauthorized drugs/substances and/or possessing items prohibited by law, while at school.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
  1. Two years' probation of license;
  2. Fine of \$250 (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) Continue with AA meetings and provide quarterly reflections to PLSB on progress through AA.
- (iii) Provide quarterly progress reports to PLSB from AA sponsor.
- (iv) Provide Alcohol Assessment to PLSB from licensed mental health care provider prior to returning to the classroom.
- (v) Written reflections provided to PLSB quarterly to show how educator's progress will impact her future behavior.
- (vi) To be completed by: All costs paid by Educator within 90 days of State Board Order.

g. On April 3, 2020, Educator Emerson was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by first class and certified mail. Educator Emerson accepted the recommendation of the Ethics Subcommittee letter sent via first class and certified mail on May 19, 2020.

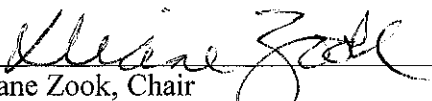
h. At today's meeting, the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and supporting documentation were presented to the Board as part of its consent agenda.

## **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 Emerson for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Emerson is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$250 may result in the suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.

- c. Educator Emerson 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 of his license.
- d. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Emerson 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