

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
CELIA WORTHAM
APRIL 9, 2020**

PLSB CASE NO. #20-047

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on April 9, 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 Celia Wortham (Educator Wortham). Based upon Educator Wortham'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 Wortham a standard five-year teaching license on May 17, 2017, valid until December 31, 2021.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Wortham 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 October 4, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Wortham 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 Wortham was notified on October 4, 2019, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
 - e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on January 17, 2020, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Wortham:
 1. Engaged in physical contact with a student and engaged in inappropriate interactions with a student.
 2. Exhibited an inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
 - f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 1. Written Reprimand by State Board of Education, Fine of \$100.
 2. 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) Children's Challenging Behaviors ;10 Hours (Online)
<https://www.carecourses.com/Ecommerce/CourseDetail.aspx?ItemID=326>
 - g. Written reflections should include how trainings will impact interactions with students and should be completed within 90 days of the Final State Board order. (All costs paid by Educator).
 - h. On January 17, 2020, Educator Wortham was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. On February

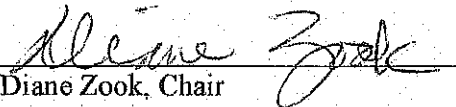
6, 2020, Educator Wortham accepted the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation thereby waiving her/his right to any further notice, hearing, or any other rights she/he may have under the Administrative Procedure Act, including those rights set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 25-15-212.

- 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 Celia Wortham for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Wortham is cautioned that further violations of the Code of Ethics or failure to pay the fine within ninety (90) days from the date of this order may result in more severe discipline including permanent revocation of her license.
- c. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Wortham 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