

**THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:  
STEVE HENRY THOMAS  
AUGUST 8, 2019**

**PLSB CASE NO. 19-079**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER**

At its regular meeting on August 8, 2019, 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 Steve Henry Thomas (Educator Thomas). Based upon Educator Thomas' failure to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and the evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures 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 Thomas a standard five-year teaching license on February 27, 2017, valid until December 31, 2021.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Thomas 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 7, 2018, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Thomas violated Standard 1: an educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside of 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 Thomas was notified on December 10, 2018, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on June 5, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Thomas:
- Inappropriate physical contact with a student(s);
  - Inappropriate use of social media and/or electronic communication;
  - Inappropriate interactions with student(s); and
  - Inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
1. Permanent Revocation of license; and
  2. Assess a \$500 fine (due within 90 days of the State Board Order).
- g. On June 7, 2019, Educator Thomas was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. Educator Thomas failed to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation thereby waiving his right to any further notice, hearing, or any other rights he may have under the Administrative Procedure Act, including those rights set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 25-15-212.
- 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 Steve Henry Thomas for his violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Thomas' professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

  
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Diane Zook, Chair  
Arkansas State Board of Education