

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
JEREMY RONDAL WORTHAM
JUNE 13, 2019**

PLSB CASE NO. 19-039

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on June 13, 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 Jeremy Rondal Wortham (Educator Wortham). Based upon Educator Wortham's 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 Wortham a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2015, valid until December 31, 2019.
- 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 September 7, 2018, 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 of the classroom; Standard 2: an educator maintains competence regarding his or her professional practice, inclusive of skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities relating to

his or her organizational position; and Standard 4: an educator entrusted with public funds and property, including school-sponsored activity funds, honors that trust with honest, responsible stewardship.

- d. Educator Wortham was notified on September 10, 2018, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on April 8, 2019, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1, 2, and 4 in that Educator Wortham:
 - Engaged in inappropriate communications with a student;
 - Interacted inappropriately with students; and
 - Misused school computer.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 1. Suspend license for 2.5 years;
 2. Assess a \$450 fine (due within 90 days of the State Board Order);
 3. Require Educator to complete the following coursework/readings:
 - ERC18064: Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB): The Code of Ethics Training Video (2017)
 - TCC14435: Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB): Social Media Guidelines
 - SPC17012 Introduction to Behavior: General Classroom Management Systems
 - Title: THE Classroom Management Book (320p); Author: Harry K. Wong, Rosemary T. Wong, Sarah F. Jondahl, Oretha F. Ferguson; ISBN-13: 978-0976423393; ISBN-10: 0976423391
 - Title: If You Can't Manage Them, You Can't Teach Them (280p); Author: Kim Campbell, Dr. Kay Herting Wahl; ISBN-10: 0865305137; ISBN-13: 978-0865305137

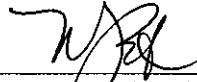
4. Require Educator to prepare written reflection: that explains how trainings and readings will impact student interactions, both inside and outside of the classroom (due within 30 days prior to the end of the suspension); and
 5. Require Educator to pay all associated costs.
- g. On April 15, 2019, Educator Wortham, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. Educator Wortham 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 Jeremy Rondal Wortham for his violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Wortham is cautioned that his non-payment of the assessed fine of \$450 will result in the continued suspension of his license until the fine is paid in full.
- c. 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 his license.

- d. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Wortham's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Dr. Jay Barth, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education