

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
CHRISTOPHER LEE BETHEL
APRIL 11, 2019**

**LICENSURE ACTION
CASE NO.:
LA-19-02**

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on April 11, 2019, the Arkansas State Board of Education (Board) heard the request to grant a waiver of the disqualifying offense to allow Mr. Christopher Lee Bethel (Educator Bethel) to continue to pursue a teaching license pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410(f)(3)(A)(B). Based upon the testimony and evidence presented, and 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 Department received information that on August 12, 2008, Educator Bethel, was found guilty of Assault Causing Bodily Injury- Family Member; which is a disqualifying offense for obtaining teacher license under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410.
- b. Educator Bethel was notified that he was found guilty of the disqualifying offense, and had thirty (30) days to request a waiver hearing of the disqualifying offense.
- c. Educator Bethel requested a hearing regarding the waiver of the disqualifying offense.
- d. Educator Bethel is currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program.
- e. The Board considered:
 - i. The educator's age at the time of the offense;

- ii. The circumstances surrounding the offense;
 - iii. The length of time since the offense;
 - iv. The educator's subsequent work history;
 - v. The educator's employment and character references; and
 - vi. Other evidence demonstrating that the applicant does not pose a threat to the health or safety of school children or school personnel.
- f. A motion was made to grant Educator Bethel's request for a waiver. The motion carried.

II. Conclusions of Law

- a. The State Board of Education may consider a true report in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry or certain enumerated offenses as a disqualification for licensing. See Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-17-410(c), 6-17-410(d) (A) (5) and 6-17-411. This includes offenses which have been expunged, sealed, and pardoned by the governor.
- b. Upon consideration of the evidence presented at the meeting and pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, 6-17-410 and 25-15-201 et seq., the Arkansas State Board of Education waives Educator Bethel's disqualifying offense for the purposes of licensing and employment eligibility. If Educator Bethel completes his teacher preparation program and otherwise meets the requirements for licensing, the Department may issue him a license.
- c. Educator Bethel's request for a waiver of the disqualifying offense is granted.
- d. This Order shall become a permanent entry in the licensure file of the educator.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Dr. Jay Barth, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education