

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
COURTNEY LEANNE MACE
DECEMBER 13, 2018**

PLSB CASE NO. 18-136

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on December 13, 2018, 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 Courtney Leanne Mace (Educator Mace). Based upon Educator Mace'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 Mace a standard five-year teaching license on February 25, 2015, valid until December 31, 2019.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Mace 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 May 4, 2018, the Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Mace violated 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 8: An

- educator refrains from using, possessing and/or being under the influence of alcohol or unauthorized drugs/substances and/or possessing items prohibited by law, or possessing or using tobacco or tobacco-related products while on school premises or at school-sponsored activities involving students.
- d. Educator Mace was notified on May 8, 2018 of the subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on October 5, 2018, the subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 2 and 8 in that Educator Mace:
- Possessed alcohol at school; and
 - Failed to secure prescribed medication.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
- Suspend Educator Mace's license for twelve (12) months;
 - Assess a \$300 fine (due within 90 days following the State Board's final order);
 - Require her to attend appropriate treatment program;
 - Provide a letter from a licensed mental health professional that the Educator is fit to return to the classroom (to include status of compliance with treatment plan) within 90 days of suspension end date;
 - Provide quarterly reports on treatment progress for the duration of the one-year suspension; and
 - Submit written reflection explaining the importance of continued compliance with treatment plan(s), and how the Educator will cope with life stressors more appropriately (due within 90 days of the final order date); and
 - Require that all associated costs be paid by Educator Mace.
- g. On October 8, 2018, Educator Mace was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. Educator Mace failed to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation

thereby waiving her right to any further notice, hearing, or any other rights she 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 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 Mace for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Mace is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$300 will result in the continued suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.
- c. Educator Mace 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.
- d. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Mace'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