

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
LAURA LOUISE KEITH
NOVEMBER 8, 2018**

PLSB CASE NO. 18-107

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on November 8, 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 Laura Louise Keith (Educator Keith). Based upon Educator Keith'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 Laura Louise Keith a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2017, valid until December 31, 2021.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Keith 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 March 2, 2018, the Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Keith 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 skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities relating to his or her organizational position.

- d. Educator Keith was notified on March 5, 2018 of the subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on September 7, 2018, the subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Keith:
 - Engaged in inappropriate communications with a student in person or via electronic communication (sexual);
 - Engaged in inappropriate use of social media and/or electronic communication; and
 - Engaged in inappropriate interactions with a student (non-sexual).
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 - Suspend Educator Keith's license for two (2) years;
 - Assess a \$500 fine;
 - Require her to complete Mental Health Counseling with quarterly reports on treatment progression;
 - Require her to provide a Letter of Fitness to return to classroom from a Licensed Mental Healthcare Professional (within 30 days of expiration of suspension period);
 - Complete ERC18064 Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB): The Code of Ethics Training Video (2017) (.5 credit hours);
 - Complete course TCC14435 Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB): Social Media Guidelines (3 credit hours);
 - Complete course LAG17029 Success Favors Well-Prepared Adults: Unpacking your Personality Package (1 credit hour);
 - Read book: The Active/Ethical Professional: A Framework for Responsible Educators (200p), Author: Michael C. Gunzenhauser, ISBN 10: 1441152105, ISBN 13: 978-1441152107;
 - Submit written reflections for each course and book indicating how the trainings and reading impact interactions with students inside and outside the classroom (due within 90 days of the final order date); and

- Require that all associated costs be paid by Educator Keith.
- g. On September 10, 2018, Educator Keith, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. Educator Keith 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 Keith for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Keith is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$500 will result in the continued suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.
- c. Educator Keith 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 Keith'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