

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
REBECCA ELIZABETH STEPHENS
JUNE 14, 2018**

PLSB CASE NO. 18-040

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on June 14, 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 Rebecca Elizabeth Stephens (Educator Stephens). Based upon Educator Stephens'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 Rebecca Elizabeth Stephens a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2014, valid until December 31, 2018.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Stephens 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 October 6, 2017, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Stephens 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 Stephens was notified on October 9, 2017, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on April 9, 2018, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that reasonable belief existed to substantiate violations of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Stephens "slapped", "pulled", and/or "jerked" a student.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 - Suspend Educator Stephens's license for one (1) year;
 - Assess a \$100 fine (due within 90 days of Board's final order);
 - Require educator to complete training through the ArkansasIDEAS online portal taking Course IAD14491: *Classroom Management: Managing Challenging Behavior* (2 hours);
 - Require educator to read: The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life (352p), Author: Piero Ferrucci, ISBN: 10:0143129279 or ISBN 13: 978-0143129271;
 - Require educator to write a reflection statement on how this training will impact student interactions (particularly challenging students);
 - The written reflection must be submitted to the PLSB office within ninety (90) days following the Board's final order; and
 - Require that all associated costs be paid by Educator Stephens.
- g. On April 11, 2018, Educator Stephens, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail. Educator Stephens did not respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation in the allotted time, 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 Stephens for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Stephens is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$100 will result in the continued suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.
- c. Educator Stephens 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 Stephens'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