

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
JUNE 11, 2015**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
IN RE MELISSA RENE GRICE, PLSB CASE NO. 15-001**

At its regular meeting on June 11, 2015, 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 Melissa René Grice (“Educator Grice”). Based upon Educator Grice’s consent 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 Grice a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2014, valid until December 31, 2018.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Grice violated the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators (“Code of Ethics”) promulgated pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § § 6-17-422 and 6-17-428.
- c. On July 7, 2014, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Grice violated Standards 1 and 3: 1) An educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom. 3) An educator honestly fulfills reporting obligations associated with professional practices.

- d. On July 11, 2014, Educator Grice was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate the allegations.
- e. On January 9, 2015, after considering the investigator's report and evidence the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that Educator Grice violated Standards 1 and 3 of the Code of Ethics when she:
- Did not turn in at least one student that she knew was either drinking and/or under the influence of alcohol; and
 - Conspired with some students to assert blame on students from another school should her students be questioned about who brought alcohol.

The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the Board place Educator Grice's license on suspension for two (2) years and assess a fine of \$100.

- f. On January 13, 2015, Educator Grice was notified, through her attorney, of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail.
- g. On January 16, 2015, Educator Grice, through her attorney, rejected the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation on and requested an evidentiary hearing under the Administrative Procedure Act including those rights set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 25-15-212.
- h. On April 3, 2015, the Ethics Subcommittee amended its initial decision and recommended that the Board place Educator Grice's license on suspension for one (1) year and assess a fine of \$100.
- i. On May 11, 2015, Educator Grice, through her attorney, accepted Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation, thereby waiving her right to any further notice, or hearing, or any other right she might have under the Administrative Procedure Act including those rights set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 25-15-212.

- j. 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 and pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, 6-17-401, 6-17-422, 6-17-428 and 25-15-201 et seq., and the Code of Ethics, the Board adopts the recommendations of the Ethics Subcommittee.
- b. Accordingly, the Board orders suspension of Educator Grice's license for one (1) year and assesses a fine of \$100.
- c. Educator Grice 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 Grice's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Samuel Ledbetter, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education