

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
ROBERT RUPPE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2022**

PLSB CASE NO. 22-116

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on September 8, 2022, 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 Robert Ruppe (Educator Ruppe). Based upon Educator Ruppe's failure to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and the evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure 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 Ruppe a standard five-year teaching license on August 12, 2020, valid until December 31, 2024.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Ruppe 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 6, 2022, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Ruppe violated *Standard 1: an educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom;* *Standard 2: an educator maintains competence regarding his or her professional*

practice, inclusive of professional and ethical behavior, skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities relating to his or her organizational position;

- d. Educator Ruppe was notified on April 4, 2022, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on July 8, 2022, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Ruppe:
 - Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student.
 - Exhibited inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
 - Violated district, state or federal policies or law.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 1. Probation of license for 6 months.
 2. Assess a \$150 fine (due within 90 days of the State Board Order);
 3. Require Educator to complete the following coursework/readings:
 - a. ERC20059: Professional Licensure Standards Board Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators: Ethical Scenarios in Education (2020) Credit Hours: 1
 - b. Title: I Notice: A Step-by-Step Guide to Transform Student Potential Through Building Intentional Relationships Author: Claire E. Hallinan ISBN-10: 1733035613 ISBN-13: 978-1733035613
 - b. Title: The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence (208p) Author: Dacher Keltner ISBN 10: 0143110292 ISBN 13: 78-0143110293
 4. Educator to provide written reflections on each individual training to explain how he will utilize the trainings in his interactions with students

and how they apply to his violation of the Code of Ethics. Due to the
PLSB Ethics Subcommittee 30 days prior to the end of probation.

5. Require Educator to pay all associated costs.

- g. On July 14, 2022, Educator Ruppe, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by secure server. Educator Ruppe failed to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation thereby waiving his right to any further notice, hearing, or any other rights he 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 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, 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 Ruppe for his violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Ruppe is cautioned that his non-payment of the assessed fine of \$150 will result in the continued suspension of his license until the fine is paid in full.
- c. Educator Ruppe 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 Ruppe's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.


Ouida Newton, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education