

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 8, 2026
9:00 A.M.

APPEARANCES

BOARD MEMBERS:

MS. ADRIENNE WOODS, Chair
MS. LISA HUNTER, Vice Chair
MR. JEFF WOOD
MS. LEIGH KEENER
MR. KEN BRAGG
MR. RANDY HENDERSON
MR. DAVID PEACOCK
DR. GARY ARNOLD
DR. AARON ABBOTT

NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. JACOB OLIVA, Secretary of Education

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. STACY SMITH, Deputy Commissioner - DESE
MS. COURTNEY SALAS-FORD, ADE Chief of Staff
MS. WHITNEY JAMES, PLSB Managing Attorney
MR. DANIEL SHULTS, Chief Legal Counsel I

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium/Zoom
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas

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PROCEEDINGS

2 || I. ACTION AGENDA

3 I.1. REQUEST FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF THE DCTE RULES GOVERNING THE
4 ARKANSAS ADULT PROGRAM

5 CHAIR WOODS: I think we're going to start with
6 the first action item.

7 MS. SMITH: Good morning. Stacy Smith, deputy
8 commissioner.

9 First action item is -- has our rules.

10 Kevin, do we have the slide deck?

11 These rules are the rules governing the Arkansas
12 Adult Diploma Program. These rules have been
13 presented to this Board before.

14 Let me keep clicking here. There we go.

existing rules that had some legislative things that
needed to be -- definitions needed to be cleaned up,
and they had to clarify the payment process for the
program. And those were the changes that were
actually made to the rules. So I'd ask this board
for approval for final approval to move to ALC.

7 | Okay, any questions?

8 (NO RESPONSE)

11 MS. HUNTER: So moved.

12 CHAIR WOODS: I have a motion by Ms. Hunter. Do
13 I have a second?

14 DR. ABBOTT: Second.

15 CHAIR WOODS: Seconded by Dr. Abbott.

16 All in favor, say aye.

17 CHAIR WOODS: Any opposed?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 Hearing none, motion passes.

20 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

21 I.2. AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENT OF STIPENDS AND EXPENSE
22 REIMBURSEMENT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

23 CHAIR WOODS: All right. Ms. Salas Ford --
24 Chief Salas-Ford.

25 MS. SALAS- FORD: The actual.

1 CHAIR WOODS: The actual.

2 MS. SALAS-FORD: No, I am just blessed to follow
3 the infamous Stacy Smith.

4 Good morning, Courtney Salas-Ford for the
5 Department.

6 I am bringing to you a very important but minor
7 issue. You all are required by law to -- each year
8 authorize to pay yourselves a stipend for your
9 meeting for attendance, obviously, and any expense
10 reimbursement for mileage. In the past, it has been
11 set at \$85 per meeting. And so you do have authority
12 to increase that or to stay at that rate that it has
13 been for many, many, many years.

14 So with that, I will kick it to the Board.

15 CHAIR WOODS: I'm just going to go on record
16 that I think this is so funny that we have to approve
17 our own stuff, but I also know Congress does it.

18 So does anybody have any questions? Discussion?

19 (NO RESPONSE)

20 CHAIR WOODS: If not, then I need a motion and a
21 second. We're all -- nobody wants to do that.

22 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: So I will make the motion.

23 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. Motion by Ms. Hunter. Do I
24 have a second?

25 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

1 CHAIR WOODS: Seconded by Mr. Henderson.

2 All in favor, say aye.

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIR WOODS: Any opposed?

5 Hearing none, motion passes.

6 MS. SALAS-FORD: Thanks.

7 CHAIR WOODS: Thank you.

8 **I.3. CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL**
9 **LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD FOR CASE NO. 25-223 - MANDY GOODWIN**

10 CHAIR WOODS: All right. Then we are going to
11 move on to the consideration of the PLSB case No.
12 25-223 to Ms. Mandy Goodwin.

13 If you're going to be testifying, I need you to
14 stand up so that I can administer an oath. Anybody
15 else? Okay. If you'll raise your right hand. Do
16 you solemnly affirm and swear that what you will be
17 testifying today will be the truth and the whole
18 truth and that you got the truth?

19 MS. GOODWIN: I do.

20 CHAIR WOODS: Thank you.

21 All right. Let's get started. I think we're
22 going to have Mr. Shults come up and he's going to
23 give us our rules for the road.

24 MR. SHULTS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen
25 of the Board.

1 As I'm sure y'all are well aware, this is a PLSB
2 review of a hearing committee determination. The
3 educator has appealed that decision for your
4 consideration. This hearing is a consideration of
5 the transcript, the pleadings and the oral argument
6 only. The educator will be provided ten minutes.
7 The PLSB will then be provided ten minutes. The
8 chair can add additional time -- at the chair's
9 discretion for cause. The -- the -- also at the
10 request of the Board, the PLSB investigator or the
11 educator can be asked to answer questions. All
12 testimony provided by the educator and the PLSB will
13 be given under oath. In this process, those are the
14 only testimony you should receive.

15 CHAIR WOODS: Thank you. And I just want to,
16 for the benefit of our newer board members, make sure
17 -- we are looking for whether or not the act was
18 committed, the sanction and then the rationale; is
19 that correct? Those are the decisions for us today?

20 MR. SHULTS: Yes, ma'am.

21 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. Thank you.

22 So as we go through, there will be three
23 different motions, just for your benefit.

24 Okay. Then, Mr. Kees.

25 MR. KEEPS: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIR WOODS: All right.

2 MR. KEES: Thank you, members of the board.

3 Always good to be in front of you. I was dropping my
4 kids off at school today and I told my eight-year-old
5 I was going to help a teacher try to keep her license
6 today. And my eight-year-old said, well, I sure hope
7 she's able to keep driving. And it reminded me how
8 great it is to be a kid in Arkansas and not have to
9 worry about some of the -- the weighting decisions we
10 have.

11 I represent Mandy Goodwin, and I can truly say
12 it's an honor to be able to represent her on this
13 issue today regarding her teaching license. The
14 recommendation before you is a one-year suspension of
15 her license, and I think that there are a lot of
16 facts that are -- were unclear to the subcommittee,
17 and we want a chance to clarify those today. I think
18 a lot of that is because in this process, as you may
19 be aware, you go into the subcommittee with one issue
20 that's been presented. You know, there's no
21 discovery in these issues -- in these matters. You
22 just show up at the hearing, and you know what the
23 complaint is. And so we knew that the complaint was
24 a prayer with a student. But then when we go into
25 the hearing and they last hours, which is

1 understandable, we need to get down to the meat of
2 the issue. The board members or the committee
3 members are able to ask questions. A lot of other
4 things are brought up. And I just feel like some of
5 the facts that were brought up, or some of the issues
6 that were brought up, the facts weren't clear. And
7 we want opportunity to clarify that today.

8 I want to make sure that I -- this is the
9 Concord community. Mandy did not ask one person to
10 be here. She said she couldn't even turn around to
11 see who was here because of how emotional it is. But
12 she has huge support from her community. This is her
13 husband, Blake who at -- was previously a volunteer,
14 AAA volunteer, and he's here today to support her.
15 Her two daughters, Ali and Ana, who were both part of
16 this; they were part of a Bible study that you may
17 have read about. And her current superintendent, Mr.
18 Wallace, who fully supports her. I think we have a
19 board member from Concord, and then her previous
20 superintendent is also here as well, Mr. Jeff
21 Williams. And, you know, they want her to return to
22 Concord High School, which has a B, so we're excited
23 about that. I want to let her talk and clarify
24 things because I know that you don't want to hear
25 from lawyers. You want to hear from her. And then I

1 will help clarify anything I can. But we just want
2 to make sure that you as a board know the facts.
3 What started as a simple voluntary prayer with a
4 student who Mandy and her husband had prayed for many
5 times before, a very troubled student in a very
6 difficult situation, has been contorted into
7 something it's not with talks of demons and rape and
8 suicide. And that's just -- those facts are not
9 accurate, and we want to clarify that for you today.
10 So I'm going to let Mandy talk and share with you.

11 MS. GOODWIN: Thank you for allowing me the
12 opportunity to stand before you today and to speak as
13 part of this appeal process. I appreciate your time
14 and your willingness to listen.

15 I began coaching more than 20 years ago because
16 of the impact my own coaches had on my life. I
17 played sports through high school and college, and I
18 personally experienced the pressures, insecurities
19 and emotional challenges that a young female athlete
20 faces. At the beginning of my career, I did not yet
21 have my own children, but even then I understood the
22 student athlete often carries burdens far beyond the
23 game. Over the years, those pressures have only
24 increased for these students. My purpose as a coach
25 has always been to help young women grow, not just as

1 athletes, but as -- but as people. I have always
2 tried to teach communication, teamwork, respect and
3 resilience with the hope that my players would become
4 confident leaders in their families, careers and
5 communities. I have never viewed coaching as just my
6 job. It is my calling.

7 The incident that brings me before you today
8 arose from a single voluntary prayer offered on a
9 Sunday for a student player who had experienced
10 repeated seizures. This prayer did not occur during
11 instructional time or on school activity, but on a
12 weekend and was completely voluntary. I asked the
13 student for permission to pray with her, and I also
14 asked the adult caring for her at the time if she
15 would let -- be okay, and they both said yes. The
16 prayer was arranged on a Sunday so it would not -- so
17 it would be outside of school hours, and my husband
18 and I met the student at the school gym. The prayer
19 was offered only because the student was hurting,
20 scared and in physical distress for several months.
21 We previously planned to meet at the home where the
22 student was staying. She was staying with the mother
23 of the then boyfriend, but the adult was sick that
24 day and the meeting at her home was not available.
25 So she suggested that we pivot to the gym where I had

1 access.

2 The student was someone my husband and I had
3 coached for several years, both in school and travel
4 sports. She was a professing Christian, active in my
5 Fellowship of Christians Athlete program, and had
6 prayed with me before. Nothing about the prayer was
7 intended to be secretive or coercive. My husband was
8 also present along with the student's boyfriend and a
9 couple of others who were practicing ball in the gym,
10 and the family member who brought the student was
11 also invited to stay but refused.

12 I understand now that even with good intentions,
13 certain words or situations can be misunderstood or
14 later viewed differently. I am truly sorry that any
15 words spoken by me or in my presence caused
16 discomfort or distress. I take responsibility for
17 how people felt, even though my intent was never to
18 harm, frighten or pressure anyone in any way. I ask
19 you to understand that these moments -- what these
20 moments were like. It was a tough year. Please
21 place yourself in a moment when a player is crying
22 and telling you, Coach, it just hurts so bad, sorry,
23 it hurts so bad while holding her head. Or a moment
24 when a student has been med-flighted and you're told
25 the outlook does not look good.

1 CHAIR WOODS: Can we get a tissue?

2 MS. GOODWIN: Thank you.

3 Or moments when you're physically holding a
4 student during a seizure to keep them from being
5 hurt. In these moments, I was not acting for
6 attention, influence or personal gain. I was acting
7 out of care and concern. I do live my faith openly
8 and understand that this can make someone
9 comfortable. My faith has never been about control,
10 judgment or fear. It has always been about
11 compassion, hope and helping others through difficult
12 moments. That said, this process has caused me to
13 reflect deeply. I now better understand how even
14 well-intended words can be interpreted differently,
15 especially when students are vulnerable. Going
16 forward, I will be more cautious, more deliberate and
17 more aware of how my actions may be perceived.

18 What has been especially difficult for me in
19 this time, and in the days that followed, the student
20 did not appear to be distressed by the prayer. In
21 fact, she told my daughter the next morning how much
22 better she felt and ran up to my husband the same way
23 -- to say the same. She was excited that her
24 headaches were gone and went several months without
25 another seizure. I was grateful and believed she had

1 found some relief, and I still thank God for that.
2 Her suicidal thoughts that were mentioned had been a
3 year prior to this. I did not take opportunity to
4 fill Ms. Wilson in because the things became stirred.
5 And the student was okay at that moment because I
6 asked her if she had told anyone the previous year,
7 and she said yes.

8 Since then, I've taken classes to find if I was
9 supposed to report, even though it had been a year
10 later, I have not found that answer. So I apologize
11 if I did mishandle that. I respectfully asked the
12 Board to consider that multiple administrators, the
13 superintendent, principal, counselor, school board
14 and later the interim superintendent at this school
15 reviewed the situation firsthand and were going to
16 allow me to return to my coaching and teaching
17 duties. These individuals knew the student, knew me
18 and evaluated the matter with full context.

19 I am deeply troubled that a voluntary prayer
20 offered with permission and meant only to help has
21 led to the possibility of a year-long suspension. I
22 would never tell a student they were demon-possessed,
23 and that accusation is contrary to my beliefs. I
24 understand how references to spiritual struggles may
25 have been mischaracterized through hearsay, but that

1 portrayal does not reflect what truly occurred. I
2 stand before you today not claiming perfection. I
3 have failed students before, and I will fail again.
4 But I can say with certainty that my motives have
5 never been rooted in harm or personal gain. I
6 respectfully ask that no more students, including my
7 own daughter, be impacted by this decision any
8 longer.

9 Please also consider with both the Bible study
10 and the credibility of the lady who filed. I gave
11 the investigator witnesses. I was told by her that
12 she would interview anyone with firsthand knowledge
13 of the complaints. However, the other parents during
14 the Bible study were not contacted. The other lady
15 at the school who was -- guardian that filed tried to
16 get fired, was never contacted. She is the other
17 person S1 stayed with a lot because she is the mother
18 of student's best friend. Also, my husband, only --
19 the other one in the room, was not interviewed. Both
20 incidents with the two students were stated by adults
21 not there. I understand not talking with S1, but why
22 could we not have spoken with S3? The adults
23 mentioned in the complaints are friends, and I'm not
24 saying they were purposeful in it, but there are
25 condemning lies in both stories. I feel my

1 livelihood, career is on trial because of events
2 going through one person to another to become the
3 rhetoric it has become.

4 I thank you for your time. I thank you for your
5 service and for allowing me to be heard.

6 CHAIR WOODS: Thank you.

7 MR. KEES: We have the current superintendent
8 who is just going to say that, you know, she has a
9 job at Concord; we want her at Concord. So if you
10 want to hear from him, you can, but that's the crux
11 of that.

12 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. We're going to hear from
13 the Department and give them their ten minutes, and
14 then we may, as a Board, have questions for you or
15 the superintendent. All right.

16 MS. JAMES: Just a point of clarification on the
17 rules, only the educator, myself and Mr. Kees are
18 able to speak during the hearing. Yes, ma'am.

19 Again, my name is Whitney James with the
20 Department. I haven't met everybody here, but
21 everyone else has seen me before.

22 In this case, Ms. Mandy Goodwin, a veteran
23 educator and coach, demonstrated a pattern of
24 disregard for ethical and professional boundaries
25 with students. Specifically, invasive, lengthy,

1 personal counseling of a student in conjunction with
2 a prayer in a locker room behind locked doors,
3 outside of camera view in violation of school policy,
4 and with the educator's husband, a volunteer coach,
5 present in the locker room. The student was
6 medically fragile, as you have heard, due to a head
7 injury, and she had been experiencing stress-induced
8 seizures at the time of this conversation. She had
9 also experienced trauma unrelated to the seizures.
10 The student reported to Ms. Goodwin that she had
11 thoughts of suicide.

12 And before I go on, there are some children in
13 the room. I don't you know if we want to give the
14 opportunity for their parents to -- okay.

15 CHAIR WOODS: I'll say there's the warning, so
16 if you don't want your children here, you can ask
17 them to leave, and they can come back in when we're
18 done with this portion.

19 MS. JAMES: Okay.

20 Ms. Goodwin counseled the student herself
21 instead of following the training required by law for
22 all educators and seeking professional help for the
23 student, she failed to report the student's suicidal
24 thoughts that came up during this conversation to the
25 school counselor, a mental health professional or the

1 student's parents. And there was discussion with a
2 different student, someone other than S1 -- we'll
3 call her S3 -- regarding viewing pornography. There
4 was testimony about it -- about that at the hearing,
5 as being a possible reason for that student, S3,
6 experiencing seizures. Ms. Goodwin allowed her
7 husband to discuss his premarital sex history with
8 students while on a school trip during a Bible study
9 session. She also shared private information about
10 student medical conditions on a public forum, namely
11 Facebook.

September the 10th of 2025. It was almost eight hours long. At the hearing, the PLSB called witnesses. The educator was allowed to present her case, and she and her husband both testified. The five members of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee unanimously upheld the recommendation of the Ethics Subcommittee. And the PLSB does not take the position that the ethics violations were related to the prayer or any religious exercise that occurred. The PLSB does take the position that the recommended sanction is based on other inappropriate, unethical and unprofessional misconduct that fell outside of any protected religious liberty or expression. The sanction recommended by both the Ethics Subcommittee and the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee should be upheld.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR WOODS: Anyone want to start?

18 Mr. Wood, you want to start? No? Okay.

19 Mr. Bragg?

20 Mr. Henderson?

21 MR. HENDERSON: Not at the moment.

22 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. Hunter?

23 MS. HUNTER: Not right now. Thank you.

24 MS. KEENER: No, no questions right now.

25 CHAIR WOODS: Dr. Arnold?

1 DR. ARNOLD: No questions.

2 CHAIR WOODS: Dr. Abbott?

3 DR. ABBOTT: No.

4 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

5 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Actually, I have a question.

6 So, Ms. Goodwin, do you have --

7 CHAIR WOODS: Would you come stand back up here,
8 please?

9 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Are you trained, like,
10 formally in counseling in any way?

11 MS. GOODWIN: No, ma'am. Can I clarify the
12 statement, I guess?

13 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Sure.

14 MS. GOODWIN: So when we were with S1, it was
15 not intended counseling. We went over scripture
16 about what we were going to pray. I did not counsel
17 her. I think that's one of the things Mr. Kees was
18 alluding to that had been lost in the shuffle. We
19 were actually speaking on -- I made a list how our
20 conversation went. We were talking about hindrances
21 to prayer, and then it came up, different ones; and
22 that's where the statement from the girl came about,
23 that she had had -- we had talked about passing
24 thoughts -- or she had had that passing thought the
25 year previous. And I'd asked her if she had received

1 help at that time. It was just a real quick moment.
2 And she had. It wasn't intrusive questioning as I
3 feel like has been brought about with the -- with the
4 statements. We went on to talk about different
5 scriptures before we prayed with her. But no, I have
6 not had the training. I just wanted to clarify this
7 counseling session because it was not a counseling
8 session, it was more of, like, a Bible study before
9 we prayed because we didn't want to do anything to
10 offend her. And I believe you'll find Ms. Amy
11 Wilson's, counselor, had mentioned that we made sure
12 that the young lady was okay with everything. And
13 that's why we took her through scripture.

14 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: So as you're thinking of
15 that, is -- is this common, like, you know, for --
16 and I applaud all educators, particularly those who
17 are so dedicated to their students inside and outside
18 the classroom. But, I mean, so is this normal
19 practice for you to recognize one of your students'
20 needs or even one of your athlete's needs and to
21 pursue -- and it's not the prayer. That's not my
22 concern here whatsoever, but you know, to just have
23 heart-to-heart conversations.

24 MS. GOODWIN: I'm a relational coach. I want to
25 make sure they're okay. As I stated in my previous

1 statement, I've seen the struggles, not necessarily
2 with them, even going through trials. I think that's
3 where some of this has been lost in translation with
4 spiritual struggles, mental struggles. I care about
5 them. I don't pressure by no means. I asked that
6 one time -- because that's been said. I asked that
7 one time in the text to the guardian and the kid and
8 the child, young lady, if she would be open to the
9 prayer. She said, yes, of course. So I've asked
10 others if they're okay. They know I pray, not that
11 I, you know, push it on them. They'll pray after the
12 ball games, and I'll stand by, you know, at the side.
13 So there are different things and different occasions
14 that I have prayed with students.

15 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Well, again, I want to be
16 clear that it's not a prayer that is --

17 MS. GOODWIN: Yes.

18 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: -- my concern here.

19 MS. GOODWIN: I don't try to --

20 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: I'm just trying to
21 understand, like, how we --

22 MS. GOODWIN: Go ahead. I don't --

23 MR. KEEPS: Yeah. Can I add one thing, Ms.
24 Hunter?

25 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Yeah.

1 MR. KEEPS: I think it's also important. S1 was
2 a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.
3 They had been to church previously. They had been in
4 Bible studies. So I don't want you to get the
5 impression that Mandy --

6 MS. GOODWIN: Sought her out.

7 MR. KEEPS: -- just goes up to students and
8 proselytizes because that wouldn't be appropriate in
9 a public-school setting. This was a student that had
10 a relationship in a -- in a forum that would be
11 allowed through the FCA. So I think that's really
12 important because that relationship was already
13 there. There was a comfort level. And the guardian
14 felt that way as well because the guardian allowed
15 the student -- she was actually going to go to their
16 home because she didn't live -- this was at a
17 previous school, she didn't live there. So the
18 guardian was fine with it and allowed the student.
19 And so I think that's important to note.

20 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Thank you.

21 CHAIR WOODS: I do want to ask a clarifying
22 question because I thought I understood it and then I
23 don't. So there was an issue with suicidal ideation.
24 Was it a year ago and you failed to report, or was it
25 in this conversation?

1 MS. GOODWIN: It was a year prior to this
2 conversation.

3 MR. KEES: It was that conversation that she
4 first learned of it.

5 MS. GOODWIN: That she mentioned it -- that I
6 learned of it.

7 CHAIR WOODS: And then you didn't report that at
8 the time?

9 MS. GOODWIN: That she had had the thought a
10 year prior?

11 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

12 MS. GOODWIN: Correct.

13 CHAIR WOODS: I think you said that in your
14 testimony.

15 MS. GOODWIN: Yes.

16 CHAIR WOODS: And is that the Department's
17 position? I guess that's where I'm confused as to
18 what we're talking about.

19 MS. JAMES: It was -- it was a little unclear,
20 but at the hearing, Ms. Goodwin did mention where it
21 became clear for the first time to us that she knew
22 about the student's suicidal ideation.

23 CHAIR WOODS: From a year prior?

24 MS. JAMES: I'm not -- I think this is the first
25 time I've heard of that, but the -- at the hearing

1 she testified that she did know during that
2 conversation in the locker room that the student had
3 expressed thoughts or suicidal ideation. Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIR WOODS: And --

5 MR. KEES: To clarify though, so they're clear.
6 When was -- the student told you at that prayer
7 meeting, but when did she say she had had the
8 thoughts?

9 MS. GOODWIN: The -- the spring previously, and
10 that's when I asked if she had gotten help and was
11 okay, she said yes.

12 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. So in this conversation,
13 she references a year ago, I was having suicidal --

14 MS. GOODWIN: Correct.

15 CHAIR WOODS: -- thoughts?

16 MS. GOODWIN: Correct.

17 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: She was reflecting.

18 CHAIR WOODS: I have got it.

19 MR. KEES: And then she followed up with, did
20 you seek any help at that time that the student
21 indicated that she had? And I told Mandy, I said I
22 think the State Board is going to have a concern with
23 that. You need to look into that. And so she took
24 proactive measures because she has been trained in --

25 CHAIR WOODS: In that and being a mandated

1 reporter.

2 MR. KEES: -- suicide response.

3 CHAIR WOODS: Sure.

4 MR. KEES: And to the extent that didn't align
5 with that, I hadn't been able to determine -- I see
6 best practice, You always want to report it in a year
7 or not. But in her testament at the time --

8 MS. GOODWIN: Yes.

9 MR. KEES: -- a year prior, she's okay. She
10 sought help. And it didn't help that Mandy was
11 placed on leave the next day.

12 MS. GOODWIN: A couple of days.

13 MR. KEES: So she wasn't able to have any more
14 conversations with the administration because she was
15 on leave for this.

16 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

17 MS. GOODWIN: Or clarify anything.

18 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

19 Thank you.

20 Any other questions?

21 MR. WOOD: I have a question --

22 CHAIR WOODS: Yes, sir.

23 MR. WOOD: -- of the, I guess the Department.
24 If the prayer that occurred in the locker room had
25 occurred anywhere else, would we be here today?

1 MS. JAMES: The reason that we're here today, if
2 it had been a simple five-minute prayer without all
3 of the other --

4 MR. WOOD: But no, no don't get into that. I
5 just want to know if the prayer that occurred on the
6 Sunday in the locker room -- if it had occurred in
7 someone's home, for instance, or if it had occurred
8 at a gas station, or if it occurred anywhere other
9 than school property, would we be here today?

10 MS. JAMES: To answer your question, I think
11 part of what brings this to you is the fact that
12 she's an educator and the locker room is an
13 aggravating --

14 MR. WOOD: Let's just get right to the question,
15 though. The question is, if the prayer that occurred
16 on that Sunday had occurred anywhere else, would we
17 be here?

18 MS. JAMES: I can't tell you that because I've
19 never had anything like this come before me. We
20 typically don't authorize cases that are just a
21 simple prayer somewhere other than at school.

22 MR. WOOD: So -- so in breaking down the prayer
23 that occurred today, I'm going -- I'm going to start
24 from the position as -- that if this had occurred off
25 of school property, there would have been no

1 questions. We have a parent that brought a child to
2 the teacher to be prayed for. There's a lot of
3 consent going on there. And I'm also going to assume
4 into that situation -- I'll allow someone to correct
5 me -- that the parent could have been present for the
6 actual prayer, but consented to the child going to a
7 room just with the -- am I wrong about that? They
8 told -- they told them -- well, what did the parent
9 do to stop the prayer from occurring at that point?

10 MS. JAMES: Okay. She was living with someone
11 who was not her legal guardian.

12 MR. WOOD: Fair enough. And I apologize for
13 using the wrong word, maybe with the word parent. I
14 understand --

15 MS. JAMES: Sure.

16 MR. WOOD: -- as a guardian. So the person
17 responsible for the child, what did they do to stop
18 the prayer from occurring before it began?

19 MS. JAMES: Okay. Let me tell you the facts.
20 She did not do anything to stop the prayer. She
21 consented to the prayer. She did not consent to the
22 other things that came with it.

23 MR. WOOD: Such as?

24 MS. JAMES: She did not consent to the --

25 MR. WOOD: Such as?

1 MS. JAMES: -- locker room.

2 MR. WOOD: But she did. She brought them to the
3 locker room, did she not?

4 MS. JAMES: No, no. The grandmother of the
5 student dropped the student off at the school.

6 MS. KEENER: No, the grandmother of the
7 student's boyfriend?

8 MS. JAMES: The grandmother of -- I'm sorry.
9 The grandmother of S2 dropped the student off at the
10 school with the expectation that it was going to be a
11 quick -- a reasonably quick prayer. Did not know
12 they were going to take the student into the locker
13 room. Did not know that there would be nobody else
14 present because S2 walked inside with them. So I
15 think she didn't do anything to stop it because she
16 did not know what was happening.

17 MR. WOOD: But --

18 CHAIR WOODS: But I feel like -- I'm sorry.
19 Just -- but I feel like they consented to the prayer
20 by dropping her off, five minutes or 50 minutes. Am
21 I wrong?

22 MR. WOOD: I agree with that. I feel like there
23 was consent to a -- happening. I believe there was a
24 request by the guardian to have this person take them
25 to the school; is that right?

1 MS. JAMES: I believe so because the guardian
2 had shingles, but if --

3 MR. WOOD: Yeah. Whatever the reason, I'm not
4 -- and I'm -- listen, I'm not even questioning that.
5 I'm just saying, that from the perspective of the
6 educator, you have guardian consenting -- however
7 many levels ago -- consented to the student being
8 brought to the teacher for a prayer and entrusted the
9 student with an adult to take them to the prayer.
10 And then, a prayer occurred that in hindsight, the
11 guardian and one or more other adults became
12 uncomfortable with, but they were never denied the
13 opportunity to be there.

14 MR. KEEES: They were asked to say as well, Mr.
15 Wood.

16 MS. JAMES: They were give -- they gave the
17 student permission with certain expectations.

18 MR. PEACOCK: How do we know what those --

19 MR. WOOD: Where --

20 MR. PEACOCK: -- what those expectations were?

21 MR. WOOD: Where -- yeah.

22 MS. JAMES: It is -- it is throughout the
23 testimony at the evidentiary hearing. They testified
24 that they expected the student to be dropped off for
25 a quick prayer. They did not expect that the other

1 conversations would occur.

2 MR. WOOD: But quick prayer, that's not fair to
3 post-event judge the educator for praying too long or
4 saying things in the prayer that we didn't think you
5 were going to say before we allowed our student to
6 come there.

7 MS. JAMES: I believe one of the big concerns is
8 that the educator allowed her husband to talk about
9 his prior thoughts of sexual assault during the
10 prayer. There were lots of conversations within that
11 fell outside of the scope.

12 MR. WOOD: Maybe. I might -- I might could
13 understand that. If that conversation had occurred
14 at Walmart, would we be here today?

15 MS. JAMES: A conversation about sexual assault?
16 I believe so, yes, sir.

17 CHAIR WOODS: From a non-licensed educator?

18 MS. JAMES; From -- oh, are you referencing a
19 conversation with Ms. Goodwin and the student?

20 MR. WOOD: I'm referencing what occurred --
21 what's alleged to have occurred, that a conversation
22 with the teacher and the teacher's husband occurred
23 on school property. If that conversation had
24 occurred on an aisle at Walmart about -- and I
25 believe the husband of the educator said that when he

1 was in high school, he had gotten angry and had
2 thoughts of sexual assault; is that right?

3 MS. JAMES: Yes.

4 MR. WOOD: If that conversation had occurred --
5 if that -- and was accurate -- and that occurred at
6 an aisle in Walmart, would the educator be up for one
7 year suspension of her license today?

8 MS. JAMES: It's possible. We have recommended
9 revocation for one comment of a sexual nature. So
10 it's possible.

11 CHAIR WOODS: By the educator or by a third
12 party?

13 MS. JAMES: By the educator.

14 CHAIR WOODS: Right. But she didn't --

15 MS. JAMES: Or allowing. I've never -- again,
16 I've never had a situation like this where an
17 educator allowed her husband to make those comments
18 in her presence.

19 CHAIR WOODS: And I'm not saying if those were
20 true that they were appropriate, but I go back to the
21 point that Mr. Wood had. If this was at Walmart, I
22 don't know that we would be here.

23 MS. KEENER: Can I enter -- can I offer a
24 counter? Just a different thought. So one of the
25 things I really tried to do was sort of disentangle

1 the religious aspects of this from the
2 responsibilities of a licensed educator. And my
3 concern comes from the assumption that Ms. Goodwin
4 was qualified enough to not only diagnose but treat a
5 seizure disorder in the same way. That's where it's
6 problematic for me. That in addition to the failure
7 to report. In the same way that a first-grade
8 teacher might suspect a student has ADHD or suspect
9 that they have dyslexia. It is wildly inappropriate
10 and against all ethical responsibility to tell a
11 parent or tell the student, you have ADHD; you have
12 -- and here's what we're going to do to treat it.
13 We're not diagnosticians. We can't make those
14 assumptions. I do think there was a pattern of
15 repeated behavior that went beyond her qualifications
16 and role as a teacher. I also believe that if you're
17 standing in an aisle at Walmart and you hear that a
18 student once thought of suicide, it is still your
19 obligation to make sure that it's been handled. And
20 that is, as Mr. Kees said, yes, best practice. That
21 is -- I can understand a gray area. Well, I checked
22 and she said it was handled. It is still, that's the
23 failure to report. You're in an obligation to make
24 sure it's handled. Just like if I were in an aisle
25 at Walmart and overheard that, you know, one of my

1 students there was an abuse allegation, I would still
2 do my due diligence to make sure that it had been
3 properly handled because it's not -- I am not
4 qualified as an educator, nor was she, to do the
5 checks and the balances, to go through that due
6 process. That's why you turn it over to someone
7 else. So that's where I take issue. I think,
8 without a doubt, she put the student in a bad spot in
9 a position where there was a power dynamic there,
10 where the student didn't feel like she could say no.
11 And I think without a doubt, there was no malicious
12 intent here. I think she genuinely, as an educator,
13 as a caregiver, had the best interest at heart. And
14 I will always favor and prefer a deeply passionate,
15 caring educator over one that's apathetic and
16 ineffective. I think what's necessary here, and
17 ideally for every volunteer coach that's certified
18 through AAA, every pre-educator, as an onboarding
19 process, is boundaries training. That boundary
20 training for educators goes over the emotional and
21 relationship boundaries, because yes, as a relational
22 coach, that is at the core of how you can reach your
23 children. But where's the line? The boundary
24 training can help with that. It also goes over power
25 dynamics so that you can understand when you're

1 putting a child or a parent or a guardian, even
2 though they're not the legal guardian, in a weird
3 situation. It goes over communication boundaries so
4 that that AAA coach never ends up in a text group
5 with only children. It goes over physical
6 boundaries. And, of course, risk management, which
7 all, I think, would have prevented us getting to this
8 position right here. I want you to continue to
9 educate and, as you say, help young women grow in a
10 way that protects the students, protects the district
11 and the school, but also protects you. Because I
12 worry without those boundaries, you're not only
13 opening yourself up to things like this, you're also
14 opening yourself up to caregiver burnout. You can't
15 pour your heart and your soul beyond what you're
16 licensed and paid to do and not have repercussions.
17 So that's kind of where I stand on the role of the
18 educator and the license.

22 CHAIR WOODS: Oh, yes. We can have a discussion
23 all day long. If you want to take a seat --

24 MS. JAMES: Okay.

25 CHAIR WOODS: -- and discuss.

1 MR. PEACOCK: I know we have three motions that
2 were going on, whether it happened, whether the
3 punishment is appropriate and I can't remember what
4 the third one is.

5 CHAIR WOODS: Whether we are going to adopt the
6 rationale. And I'll just be honest, I didn't love
7 this rationale, so I attempted to rewrite if we end
8 up deciding if there was a violation and we have
9 something. I think this was full of subjective
10 inferences on her character rather than facts. And
11 so if we decide it was a violation, I would propose a
12 different rationale.

24 CHAIR WOODS: We can actually change this all
25 day long. We can say right now that she didn't

1 violate the standard of ethics and it's over. So
2 just to give you an idea.

3 MR. PEACOCK: I'm just trying to get clarity for
4 my -- in my head.

5 CHAIR WOODS: We are not bound by anything that
6 they relay to us. Now, a lot of times we will affirm
7 it, but we can change any part of this.

8 MR. PEACOCK: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIR WOODS: You're welcome.

10 MR. WOOD: Can I ask something oblique? And can
11 I --

12 MS. KEENER: Can I say no?

13 MR. WOOD: Yeah, you probably will. Tell me --
14 I did not pick up on a power dynamic situation.
15 Would you expand for me what you saw that you felt
16 was a power dynamic situation?

17 MS. KEENER: Now, this was reported from the
18 counselor and the principal who heard it from the
19 students. So again, this is, you know, multiple
20 lines, but the student said she didn't feel like she
21 could say no. And this is the person who holds her
22 ability to play the game. Is she going to bench her?
23 Is she in a favor another kid over me? Is she going
24 to -- am I going to lose my favor with her? In the
25 same way that a boss and -- you know, that's kind of

1 where I --

2 MR. WOOD: I have got you. I'm concerned about
3 -- I believe that can exist. I'm not sure I would be
4 prepared to say that the question, can I pray for you
5 should become off limits.

6 MS. KEENER: I agree with that.

7 MR. WOOD: I -- I understand what you're saying,
8 and I think that a response could be, well, she's my
9 coach, how can I say no to her? I think we have to
10 teach society that there are reasonable nos. Anyone
11 can say no to a reasonable number of things. There
12 are things that you could be reasonably concerned
13 about. I will -- I will be punished if I say no to
14 this, and those would be issues. I'm not sure that
15 can I pray for you should become an improper
16 question.

17 MS. KEENER: I absolutely agree with that. One
18 other concern that I had is I -- this is part of why
19 I believe the intent was true, is because they sought
20 consent, but not from the right person. That adult
21 who was living in the same home as that child could
22 not offer medical consent, couldn't give consent for
23 her to have her photos out there. The legal guardian
24 is -- that would have maybe been -- that's another
25 piece that I thought, well, just so close. But maybe

1 not a protection.

2 MR. KEES: Yeah. I can speak to that, Ms.
3 Keener.

4 MS. KEENER: Yes.

5 MR. KEES: This person, this individual, was
6 acting, like, completely in loco parentis, and there
7 was no contact with the actual mother who, my
8 understanding, had abandoned the child. And this
9 individual who consented to the prayer was taking a
10 student to school, games, doctors' appointments. So
11 I think legally she had full rights to that is our
12 understanding.

13 MS. KEENER: And I don't know --

14 MR. KEES: And let me say this --

15 MS. KEENER: -- the rules about --

16 MR. KEES: Yeah.

17 MS. KEENER: -- like -- you know, and I'm
18 equating this to marriage, that after seven years
19 you're legally married if, you know, whatever, if
20 you've lived together x long.

21 MR. KEES: No comment --

22 MS. KEENER: What is the --

23 MR. KEES: -- on marriage in Arkansas. You're
24 going to get Justin worried.

25 MS. KEENER: But what is the rule -- you know

1 that common law marriage. But what is the rule for
2 say the in loco parentis is that the common law
3 parent that where at some point she is allowed to
4 sign off on things for the school or she is the one
5 that it's not a FERPA violation to talk about the
6 academic things? Where does that line -- and maybe
7 that's what I don't know.

8 MR. KEES: I understand.

9 MS. JAMES: May I respond to --

10 MR. KEES: Can I speak to --

11 MS. JAMES: Well, I was going to respond to his
12 statements about the parent.

13 MR. KEES: Could I -- well, I've never known
14 anything about the parent. If I misspoke, it -- she
15 was never --

16 MS. KEENER: I missed --

17 MR. KEES: -- presented by the State Department.

18 MS. KEENER: I also had a different take. My
19 take on that was that the child -- the parent did not
20 abandon the child. The child chose to --

21 MR. KEES: Okay.

22 MS. KEENER: -- remove herself from a bad
23 situation.

24 MR. KEES: And I apologize if I use the term
25 abandonment. I think the point I'm trying to make

1 was Mandy felt like this in -- this parent had -- or
2 this guardian who filed the complaint had full legal
3 authority as in loco parentis to make these
4 decisions.

5 MS. JAMES: Just a point of clarification. The
6 student was living with her boyfriend because she had
7 experienced sexual trauma in her biological home, and
8 also her biological mother was out of town a lot.
9 She didn't abandon the student. The student was just
10 living there temporarily, which is, again, another
11 aggravating factor for the conversation about sexual
12 assault.

13 MR. HENDERSON: I have a question. You know,
14 when you talk about good faith versus willful intent,
15 it may have been an oversight on my behalf, but it
16 happened during the weekend, which was a Sunday, of
17 course. What was the timeline of reporting? Was it
18 reported by the guardian before the teacher had the
19 opportunity to report? And maybe an oversight on my
20 behalf, but I'm curious to know that.

21 MS. JAMES: No. The student went home that day
22 and reported to S2's mother, who she was living with
23 what had happened. She was actually very upset. Her
24 statement is in your documents. So she did report
25 that. And then I believe the school counselor called

1 her in and said, let's, you know, let's get a
2 statement, but because I believe the in loco parentis
3 guardian reported it to the district. And the
4 district and the in loco parentis guardian both filed
5 allegations with us. So that -- it -- I don't know
6 if that answers your question about the timeline, but
7 it was immediate. Like that night she went home and
8 reported and then they got the statement from her
9 that was included in your file.

10 MR. BRAGG: Could you review the reason for
11 suspension as opposed to probation or some other
12 decision?

13 MS. JAMES: Sure. There were two rationales.
14 There was one from the Ethics Subcommittee and one
15 from the Hearing Subcommittee. Which one would you
16 like to hear?

17 MR. BRAGG: Just in general, why suspension was
18 chosen?

19 MS. JAMES: Sure. The initial recommendation
20 for suspension as opposed to probation was due to
21 multiple aggravating factors, including the
22 conversation about -- about premarital sex, the
23 conversation about pornography with S3, which there
24 was testimony about that the hearing panel found to
25 be credible. The lengthy personal counseling

1 outside of the prayer. The fact that they were in a
2 locker room without cameras in violation of school
3 policy, the fact that the husband was in the locker
4 room, which is against the law, and impact on the
5 student. And at the time of the Ethics Subcommittee
6 review, there was no accountability. Like I said,
7 high level of negative impact. She has 18 years of
8 experience. She's undoubtedly had code of ethics
9 multiple times. So that is why they listed the
10 educator should have known that her actions violated
11 the code of ethics.

12 CHAIR WOODS: But I also have a question right
13 above that. It says the educator did not take
14 accountability and her demeanor indicated that she
15 would do this type of behavior again in the future.
16 That is 100 percent opposite of I feel like what
17 we've seen here.

18 MS. JAMES: That was at the time the
19 subcommittee looked at it, but when they read her
20 interview, I believe there was somewhere in there
21 that she indicated that she thought she was just
22 doing what a coach does. I'm paraphrasing there but
23 that would be in the final report that they reviewed.
24 Now, of course, at the evidentiary hearing and today
25 you might have heard something different, but this is

1 that first rationale. But the ethics hearing
2 subcommittee also gave a rationale that I have in
3 front of me.

4 MS. KEENER: I may have missed it, but do we
5 have access to the rubric? We used to have that.

6 CHAIR WOODS: Yes. I was just thinking about
7 that.

8 MS. KEENER: We used to have that packet.

9 MS. JAMES: It should be in your binder. It's
10 not? I have some extra copies.

11 MS. KEENER: That would be helpful in our --

12 MS. JAMES: I don't know how many extra copies I
13 have, but I do have some extra copies.

14 CHAIR WOODS: Can you run down the aggravating
15 and mitigating --

16 MS. JAMES: Sure.

17 CHAIR WOODS: -- for us to consider.

18 MS. JAMES: Sure, sure.

19 MS. KEENER: Yeah, that's in there.

20 CHAIR WOODS: I was just thinking about that
21 when you said that.

22 MS. JAMES: Okay. Does nobody have a copy?

23 MR. WOOD: No, I don't think we have a copy of
24 that.

25 CHAIR WOODS: Start with they. They -- they've

1 never seen it before. So --

2 MS. JAMES: Okay. I am so sorry.

3 MS. KEENER: And sometimes -- usually, it's in
4 the folder. If that could be included in the shared
5 folder ahead of time, that could be helpful too.

6 MS. JAMES: Okay. I will make sure that it is.

7 MS. SMITH: Do you have enough for everyone?

8 MS. JAMES: I hope I have enough copies. I'm
9 going to --

10 MS. SMITH: If not, I would be happy to go make
11 more for you.

12 MS. JAMES: Let me see, yes, I may need some
13 more. I've got three in addition to that one.

14 MR. WOOD: While we're reviewing that, can I ask
15 a couple of questions?

16 MS. JAMES: Yes, sir.

17 MR. WOOD: Is that okay? Two things that you've
18 mentioned -- and Ms. James, I respect your work, and
19 I'm pinpointing you with several questions. I just
20 -- please forgive me.

21 In the locker room with no cameras against
22 school policy. Tell me about that. What is wrong
23 with that?

24 MS. JAMES: The school had a policy, and they
25 had made Ms. Goodwin aware of it, that you should not

1 take a student outside of camera view. And that is
2 -- well, I understand how when you put those
3 together, you're questioning which part is --

4 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

5 MS. JAMES: I'm not saying that a camera should
6 be in the locker room.

7 MR. WOOD: She couldn't have put the camera in
8 the locker room, you know? I mean --

9 MR. KEEs: And in fairness, it was alone,
10 Whitney. That was the policy.

11 CHAIR WOODS: Also, the question of -- but we're
12 not during school hours -- during instructional time.

13 MS. JAMES: I don't think that that was clear.
14 I don't think that that was clarified. I think it
15 was just across the board, you shouldn't take a
16 student alone outside of camera view. And I believe
17 she said, well, my husband's with me, so I'm not
18 alone.

19 MR. KEEs: Can I add --

20 MR. WOOD: Well, I -- I'm willing to listen.

21 MR. KEEs: The office -- I think they're
22 suggesting the office was a better alternative. It
23 didn't have cameras and the office was being used at
24 the time by a male teacher who was out on the -- I
25 think, going back and forth. So It wasn't like a

1 nefarious to use the locker room. They were used to
2 that because she's a coach.

3 MR. WOOD: Right. The common spot?

4 MR. KEEs: Female. Female. It's quiet. There
5 was a couch there. That's in the testimony in case
6 she had a medical issue or needed a couch. And she
7 did feel like since her husband, who was a volunteer
8 with the district at the time, was also there, that
9 that wasn't a lone setting. So I can see in
10 hindsight, oh, we don't like the optics of that, but
11 I don't know that there was an alternative in the gym
12 that day if you were going to do a prayer, which I
13 think we all recognize would -- you'd want to be in a
14 quiet spot.

15 MR. WOOD: Well, then my next question is about
16 the pornography references. Can you expound on that?

17 MS. JAMES: Yes. There was a testimony at the
18 hearing, and also there was an interview with the
19 parent of S3, who claimed that he took -- S3 is a
20 student -- told her mother that Ms. Goodwin had
21 expressed to her -- or had a conversation with her
22 that was along the lines of have you viewed
23 pornography? The eyes are windows and if you view
24 pornography, that could be the reason for your
25 seizures. And the mother testified that her daughter

1 told her that under oath at the hearing. Ms. Goodwin
2 has a different version of that conversation, but
3 that is where that came from.

4 MR. WOOD: Okay.

5 DR. ABBOTT: What law was broken by the husband
6 being in the locker room? You cited -- you said that
7 was against the law, so --

8 MS. JAMES: At the time that this took place,
9 the male couldn't be in the lock -- the girls' locker
10 room, and that's where this took place.

11 MR. KEEES: Without another female present.

12 MS. KEENER: But we're not here to judge the
13 husband and his decisions and his breaking of the law
14 or policy, rights. So that's -- it's down. Is it
15 her obligation under the law or under policy as
16 opposed to --

17 MS. JAMES: I believe if you're a licensed
18 educator, then if your husband is there with you,
19 that you are somewhat responsible for what happens in
20 your presence.

21 MR. WOOD: I don't know.

22 CHAIR WOODS: But, I mean, but I also feel like
23 if she had gone in their own love with her, she would
24 be damned; right? And so she was trying this
25 two-deep leadership approach of, we have to have

1 another adult. I'm not saying it was right to have
2 her husband, but I also feel like we've put her in a
3 position to say, well, you're damned if you do, and
4 damned if you don't.

5 MS. KEENER: And I don't love the insinuation
6 that she allowed an adult to do anything. We don't
7 allow adults to do things. Adults do things. And
8 it's the -- how you handle it after the fact. And
9 that's where the failure report or -- I think comes
10 in.

11 MS. JAMES: Sure. And we argued at the hearing,
12 I believe -- or that came out in the testimony that
13 she didn't stop the conversation or the discussion
14 from continuing after those comments were made.

15 CHAIR WOODS: So I'm looking here at the
16 potential aggravating factors.

17 MS. JAMES: Yes.

18 CHAIR WOODS: There's a moderate to severe level
19 of negative impact on the student. I think that's
20 subjective given that the student had already
21 experienced trauma. I mean, I don't know if it
22 escalated it or not. There's no evidence, in my
23 opinion, of prior similar behavior. I don't know if
24 it was willful or an intentional violation of the
25 Code of Ethics. I don't know that the actions

1 constitute an act of child maltreatment. There's a
2 criminal offense -- there's no criminal offense
3 involving a student. There is moderate to severe
4 impact on the community. I mean, but I would say
5 it's in the reverse for them. There's no evidence on
6 district property offense. I guess I'm trying to
7 figure out where the subcommittee used all of these
8 aggravating factors and what it led to because I'm
9 seeing no for most of these.

10 MS. JAMES: And again, these are potential
11 aggravating factors. A lot of times they list
12 fact-specific aggravating factors.

13 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

14 MS. JAMES: This is just kind of a starting
15 point, just like the sanctioning guidelines are a
16 starting -- the starting point so that you have the
17 freedom to add your own aggravating, mitigating
18 factors.

19 CHAIR WOODS: And, I guess, that's where I come
20 back to, and again I -- I guess I'm reading the first
21 level because we said at the beginning this had
22 nothing to do with the prayer, but all of their
23 reasons are regarding the prayer and things that were
24 said during the prayer. So if I -- Exhibit 4 is what
25 I'm referencing. That looks like to be the --

1 MS. JAMES: Initial determination --

2 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

3 MS. JAMES: -- and recommendation. Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIR WOODS: Which exhibit was that?

5 DR. ARNOLD: And as we're looking at that, I
6 just wanted to note that even though we've tried to
7 separate educator from spouse, spouse from educator,
8 it seems like the spousal narrative has inflamed the
9 -- the lean of this. So that it's like if those
10 things hadn't been shared, then it would have
11 moderated this narrative from the beginning. And yet
12 -- so we're saying, well, her -- the spousal comments
13 aren't under her control. And I would agree with
14 that. But yet, the spouse is -- continues to enter
15 into the narrative in ways that add fuel to the fire
16 or passion to the narrative.

17 CHAIR WOODS: I also want to give a defense of
18 Ms. James. The PLSB sanctioning guidelines are
19 uploaded. They're not in this file, but they're in
20 another one, and I just found them, so thank you.

21 MS. KEENER: That's helpful.

22 MS. JAMES: Well, I had a few copies

23 CHAIR WOODS: I just wanted everyone to know
24 that you had put them up there.

25 MS. KEENER: That's nice to know.

1 CHAIR WOODS: I'm sorry. Where is -- I had
2 Exhibit 4 pulled out.

3 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIR WOODS: What is the other one?

5 MS. JAMES: The second rationale?

6 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

7 MS. JAMES: That would be titled, The Final
8 Determination Recommendation. That is the Hearing
9 Subcommittee's decision. And the rationale is going
10 to be on, let's see, page four of that document.

11 CHAIR WOODS: Is that Exhibit 2?

12 MS. JAMES: It is not an exhibit --

13 CHAIR WOODS: Oh.

14 MS. JAMES: -- because that came after the
15 hearing, yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIR WOODS: So I have -- here's my files. I
17 have briefs for the state, which is your brief and
18 Mr. Kee's brief. Okay. Third file, got it. Okay.

19 Does anybody else have questions?

20 (NO RESPONSE)

21 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. I do like this rationale a
22 lot better than the one I read last night. So can I
23 read the rationale that they've currently given for
24 where they came from --

25 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIR WOODS: -- the final one?

2 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIR WOODS: Just so that everybody knows.

4 MR. WOOD: Can you --

5 CHAIR WOODS: Go ahead.

6 MR. WOODS: -- tell me where this is.

7 CHAIR WOODS: So if you go to the third file --
8 let me get back out of this for a second. So if you
9 go into her file, it says, her name, review
10 documents. It's the hearing recommendation and
11 rejection file.

12 MR. WOOD: Yes. Are you about to read --

13 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

14 MR. WOOD: -- off page four of seven?

15 CHAIR WOODS: I believe so. Yes.

16 MR. PEACOCK: Yes.

17 MR. WOODS: Okay.

18 MS. KEENER: Final -- yeah.

19 CHAIR WOODS: Here's the final -- all right. So
20 it says the Hearing Subcommittee recommends the
21 aforementioned actions, based on this rationale:
22 Standard 1, the Bible study conversation that led to
23 the talk of premarital sex and the educator allowed
24 her husband to share his premarital sexual
25 experiences with current team members; the Sunday

1 meeting between the coach, her husband and a student,
2 which occurred in the locker room; and the educator
3 allowed her husband to share inappropriate topics
4 such as demon possession and sexual assault. Where
5 the educator changed the conversation, which led to
6 intrusive thoughts, including suicidal thoughts from
7 the students that were not reported. And then, the
8 violation of Standard 2 is based on the educator
9 should promote and provide an atmosphere of mental
10 and emotional safety at all times. The educator
11 engaged in unprofessional conversation while on and
12 off school grounds. Student 1 stated that she felt
13 uncomfortable, anxious and worried and expressed
14 fear. Student 3 stated there was conversation where
15 the coach would be willing to pray for the student
16 and Student 3 because the seizures could be caused by
17 demons in her. So that was their rationale.

18 MS. JAMES: And the topics of --

19 CHAIR WOODS: And the topics thereof.

20 MS. JAMES: Yes.

21 DR. ARNOLD: Just becoming more familiar with
22 this chart --

23 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

24 DR. ARNOLD: -- one year in. There's two
25 beginning sanctions for suspension: drugs and

1 alcohol, and physical contact was due resulting in
2 injury. So that would lead us then to page 3 where
3 we are pushed into considering potential aggravating
4 factors. Do I read the chart correctly?

5 CHAIR WOODS: I believe so. So the --

6 DR. ARNOLD: Page one, line one --

7 CHAIR WOODS: Yeah. Yes.

8 DR. ARNOLD: And then on page, two-thirds of the
9 way down physical contact with student --

10 CHAIR WOODS: Right.

11 DR. ARNOLD: -- resulting in injury.

12 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

13 DR. ARNOLD: So those are the two suspendable
14 sanctions.

15 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

16 MR. PEACOCK: That's where they start.

17 DR. ARNOLD: That's where they start. And then
18 that pushes us into considering potential aggravating
19 factors.

20 CHAIR WOODS: Correct.

21 DR. ARNOLD: Okay.

22 CHAIR WOODS: And remind me for the new members
23 on the Board, written reprimands do go on the file or
24 no?

25 MS. JAMES: They are not publicly viewable in

1 AELS.

2 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

3 MS. JAMES: And there would be a State Board
4 order, but it wouldn't be something that a district
5 or member of the public could see by looking at AELS
6 alone.

7 CHAIR WOODS: All right.

8 Any other comments? Questions?

9 MR. BRAGG: I, you know, looking at this
10 guidelines, I take suspension very seriously.

11 CHAIR WOODS: Me too.

12 MR. BRAGG: And I don't doubt what happened. I
13 don't have any doubt that it was inappropriate, but
14 I'm just not sure suspension is warranted.

15 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: I think it was really poor
16 judgment, not unethical behavior. And I think in my
17 mind, I can somehow --

18 CHAIR WOODS: Turn to a (inaudible)?

19 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Yeah. And there was a lot
20 of poor judgment going on in here, in my view.

21 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. James, can you tell us what is
22 the proper -- proper statement for the first motion.

23 MS. JAMES: The first motion is whether the
24 educator violated the code of ethics, and if so, what
25 standards. So motion that the educator violated or

1 did not violate standards, and we're looking at one
2 and two.

3 CHAIR WOODS: So that's the first question we
4 got to answer.

5 MS. KEENER: I'll stand by my earlier comments
6 in that I believe she went beyond her
7 responsibilities and duties as an educator by sort of
8 diagnosing and self-treating the child. I don't --
9 personally, don't believe there's sufficient evidence
10 that she herself had inappropriate interactions with
11 the student or inappropriate communication. I also
12 believe 2b violated the law or the policy by not
13 reporting. That would be kind of my thoughts.

14 CHAIR WOODS: So if I hear you correctly, you do
15 think there's a violation of Standard 2?

16 MS. KEENER: 2a and b.

17 CHAIR WOODS: Yes.

18 CHAIR WOODS: 2a and b, but not necessarily
19 Standard 1.

20 MS. KEENER: And I'm throwing that out there
21 just because I don't know that everyone agrees with
22 me, so I'm not ready to make a motion --

23 CHAIR WOODS: Sure.

24 MS. KEENER: -- but just my thoughts.

25 CHAIR WOODS: I mean, my thoughts are, I do

1 think there was a standard of ethics violation. I
2 personally think that the punishment does not rise to
3 the level that was found, but that's my personal
4 opinion on that.

5 MS. KEENER: Do you think -- do you agree that
6 1a, b and 2a, b were all violated?

7 CHAIR WOODS: So I do -- I -- the maltreatment
8 one -- the failure to report, yes. So definitely for
9 2B, you had brought up a good point about most of
10 what we're harping on from an inappropriate
11 conversation standpoint was not her. It was the
12 spouse. And we cannot -- or I am not ready to hold
13 her responsible for that. We also have no idea what
14 went on in the home afterwards. She could have said,
15 I don't know that I would have said that. I don't
16 know what we require of her to go report that to her
17 principal. I don't know. But I definitely say 2b
18 would be mine.

19 DR. ARNOLD: So when we make a motion or vote
20 upon a motion, will we segregate those two standards?

21 CHAIR WOODS: So I think what a motion would --
22 as an example, we could put forward that motion is to
23 find that the educator violated Standard 2b.
24 Somebody would second that, and then that would be
25 the only thing we would do, or it wouldn't get

1 seconded, and then somebody would add to it. That's
2 the way you do it.

3 And I think it's -- correct me if I'm wrong, did
4 she violate the standard of ethics, yes or no? And
5 then, in our rationale, we would explain which one?
6 Or would you put that in your first motion?

7 Your motion would -- well, your rationale is
8 separate. Your first motion is, if you say, I -- my
9 motion is that she violated Standard 1, that is also
10 saying she violated the code of ethics.

11 || CHAIR WOODS: Okay. So --

12 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIR WOODS: Basically, we're just trying to
14 find if she did.

15 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIR WOODS: As a broad policy. Okay.

17 MS. KEENER: Well, I'll make a motion that I
18 believe she violated 2a and 2b.

19 CHAIR WOODS: Okay. I have a motion by Ms.
20 Keener for defining that the educators did violate
21 the standard of ethics, specifically Standards 2A and
22 2B. Do I have a second?

23 || (NO RESPONSE)

24 CHAIR WOODS: Going once. Okay. Having no
25 second, motion fails. Do I have another motion?

1 MS. KEENER: I'll try again with I will make a
2 motion that she violated 2b.

3 CHAIR WOODS: I have a motion by Ms. Keener that
4 the educator did violate the student of ethics,
5 specifically 2b. Do I have a second?

6 MR. PEACOCK: I'll second that.

7 CHAIR WOODS: Who's that? Mr. Peacock?

8 MR. PEACOCK: Yes.

9 CHAIR WOODS: So I have a second by Mr. Peacock.

10 MR. WOOD: Before we --

11 CHAIR WOODS: I'm going to do a roll call vote.

12 MR. WOOD: Before we vote on that, could you
13 elaborate on what -- what was violated?

14 CHAIR WOODS: I think it was a failure to report
15 the --

16 MS. KEENER: Yes.

17 CHAIR WOODS: -- suicidal ideation.

18 MR. WOOD: Failure to report. So -- so it's
19 going to be our position --

20 MS. KEENER: That when you hear a student
21 talking about suicide, it -- you are under, by law
22 and policy --

23 MR. WOOD: And there's no --

24 MS. KEENER: -- obligation to report it to
25 somebody.

1 MR. WOOD: Do you believe there's any statute of
2 limitation on that burden?

3 MS. KEENER: I don't because it is not my
4 obligation as an educator to determine whether it's
5 been handled or not. My only obligation is to turn
6 it over to those that are qualified to do so.

7 MR. WOOD: My pushback on that respectfully,
8 Lee, I --

9 MS. KEENER: Yeah, of course.

10 MR. WOOD: -- I respect the heck out of you.
11 There is a statute of limitation. It is not written
12 down anywhere, but we all have one. If she had said
13 five years ago, I thought about killing myself, that
14 would not be unethical for the teacher to not report
15 that. The question is: is one year too far?

16 Yesterday is clearly a burden to report. I have a
17 problem saying that a year ago and no other factors
18 compel me to believe there are still suicidal
19 ideations going on, I just don't know that I can
20 agree to that with that length of time.

21 MS. KEENER: I respect you, but I disagree.

22 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

23 CHAIR WOODS: All right. Well, I do have a
24 motion and a second, so I can take a vote. So we all
25 -- all the vote is on is whether the educator

3 So Mr. Peacock, I will start with you. Do you
4 believe yes or no?

5 MR. PEACOCK: Aye.

6 CHAIR WOODS: Aye.

7 Dr. Abbott?

8 DR. ABBOTT: No.

9 || CHAIR WOODS: Dr. Arnold?

10 DR. ARNOLD: No.

11 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. Keener?

12 MS. KEENER: Yes.

13 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. Hunter?

14 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: No.

15 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Henderson?

16 MR. HENDERSON: No.

17 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Bragg?

18 MR. BRAGG: No.

19 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Wood?

20 MR. WOOD: No.

21 CHAIR WOODS: Motion fails.

22 Is there any other standard of ethics violation?

23 MR. WOOD: I -- I will make a motion next.

1 been said by the husband were said, I find them
2 inappropriate. I'm not judging that they were
3 actually said. But if they were, I would very much
4 caution you to be very careful about language like
5 that. This does seem to have touched on some topics
6 that were extremely sensitive. However, I don't
7 believe that Ms. Goodwin should be held responsible
8 for those things, if they were said at all. I would
9 also encourage parents to be involved in the
10 decision-making process about what you take your
11 children to before you take them there, rather than
12 complain afterwards when you decide you don't like
13 it. I respect that you might not have liked it.
14 Every parent -- even in my own role as parent, I want
15 the opportunity to have my judgment on what
16 situations my children are involved in. I one
17 thousand percent support that. But don't take your
18 children to a teacher who is asked to pray for them
19 and then complain -- and not be present -- and then
20 complain later about the prayer. I find that
21 disturbing at a pretty high level. Educators have to
22 be responsible, have to make good decisions, have to
23 be careful, protect themselves. The parents need to
24 be more involved on the front end as well.
25 And so with that, I will make a motion that we

1 find there were no ethical violations by Ms. Goodwin.

2 CHAIR WOODS: Okay.

3 I have a motion by Mr. Wood there is no ethical

4 violations. Do I have a second?

5 DR. ABBOTT: Second.

6 CHAIR WOODS: Seconded by Dr. Abbott.

7 We'll do a roll call vote.

8 Mr. Wood?

9 MR. WOOD: Yes.

10 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Bragg?

11 MR. BRAGG: Yes.

12 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Henderson?

13 MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

14 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. Hunter?

15 VICE CHAIR HUNTER: Yes.

16 CHAIR WOODS: Ms. Keener?

17 MS. KEENER: No.

18 CHAIR WOODS: Dr. Arnold?

19 DR. ARNOLD: Yes.

20 CHAIR WOODS: Dr. Abbott?

21 DR. ABBOTT: Yes.

22 CHAIR WOODS: Mr. Peacock?

23 MR. PEACOCK: Yes.

24 CHAIR WOODS: All right. And with that, you've

25 been dismissed. Thank you, Ms. Goodwin.

1 So I understand the rest of the motions are dead
2 at that point? Okay. All right. Thank you.

3 MS. JAMES: We'll get an order ready for you.

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 (The action agenda concluded at 10:28 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
)
) ss
COUNTY OF PULASKI)

I, Miranda McEntire, Certified Court Reporter #852, do hereby certify that the facts stated by me in the caption on the foregoing proceedings are true; and that the foregoing proceedings were reported verbatim through the use of the voice-writing method and thereafter transcribed by me or under my direct supervision to the best of my ability, taken at the time and place set out on the caption hereto.

I FURTHER CERTIFY, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested or otherwise, in the outcome of this action, and that I have no contract with the parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original deposition transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial attorney, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties in the action.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 4th day of February, 2026

Miranda McEntire

MIRANDA MCENTIRE, CCR
Certified Court Reporter #852

