

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
ASHLEY HIPPS
MARCH 10, 2022**

PLSB CASE NO. 22-016

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on March 10, 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 Ashley Hipps (Educator Hipps). Based upon Educator Hipps acceptance of 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 Hipps a standard five-year teaching license on July 9, 2020, valid until December 31, 2024.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Hipps 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 August 2, 2021, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Hipps 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

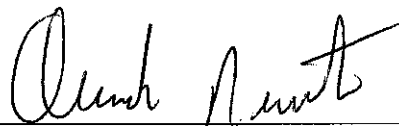
practice, inclusive of professional and ethical behavior, skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities relating to his or her organizational position;

- d. Educator Hipps was notified on August 2, 2021, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on February 11, 2022, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Hipps:
 - Engaged in inappropriate interactions with a student via electronic communication.
 - Engaged in an inappropriate interaction with a student – sexual.
 - 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. Permanent revocation of license.
- g. On February 11, 2022, Educator Hipps, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by secure server to her attorney Blake Montgomery. Educator Hipps accepted 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 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 Hipps for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Hipps 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