

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
COURTNEY LEIGH COCHRAN
DECEMBER 8, 2022**

PLSB CASE NO. 23-015

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on December 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 Courtney Leigh Cochran (“Educator Cochran”). Based upon Educator Cochran’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 Cochran a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2018 valid until December 31, 2022.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Cochran 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 July 8, 2022, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Cochran violated *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; Standard 7: an educator maintains the confidentiality of*

information about students and colleagues obtained in the course of the educator's professional services that is protected under state law or regulations, federal law or regulations or the written policies of the educator's school district, unless disclosure serves a professional purpose as allowed or required by law or regulations.

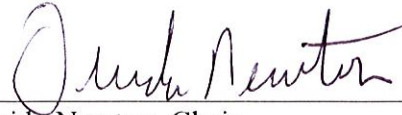
- d. Educator Cochran was notified on July 11, 2022, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on November 2, 2022, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 2 and 7 in that Educator Cochran:
 - Exhibited inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
 - Violated district, state or federal policies or law.
 - Released confidential student without an educational purpose to a parent.
 - Released confidential personnel information without an educational purpose to a parent.
- f. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
 1. Written reprimand.
 2. Assess a \$100 fine (due within 90 days of the State Board Order);
 3. Require Educator to complete the following coursework/readings:
 - a. Beginning Administrator Code of Ethics training as provided by the PLSB staff.
 4. Educator to provide written reflections on each individual training to explain how training will impact her educational practices moving forward. To be completed within 30 days of the completion of training to the PLSB for approval.

5. Require Educator to pay all associated costs.
- g. On November 2, 2022, Educator Cochran's attorney, was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by secure server and on November 4, 2022 by certified mail. Educator Cochran failed to respond to 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 Cochran for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Educator Cochran 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 Cochran 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 Cochran's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ouida Newton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ouida Newton, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education