

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
CHASE FERRELL UTLEY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2024**

PLSB CASE NO. 24-111

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on August 8, 2024, the Arkansas State Board of Education (“Board”) reviewed the findings of the Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Hearing Subcommittee (“Hearing Subcommittee”) for disciplinary action against the teaching license of Chase Ferrell Utley (“Educator Utley”). Based upon the evidence presented to the Board, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Ark. Code Ann. 25-15-101 et seq., the Board hereby states as follows:

Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

- a. On April 17, 2024, Educator Utley and his attorney appeared for his evidentiary hearing before the Hearing Subcommittee.
- b. After a review of the evidence, the Hearing Subcommittee found, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that Educator Utley violated Standards 1 and 2 of the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators, and recommended Suspension of License for 6 months followed by a Probation of License for 2 years, and pay a fine of \$250.00.
- c. Educator Utley accepted the recommendation on April 26, 2024.
- d. The case was placed on the June 13, 2024, State Board of Education consent agenda. The Board voted to move the case to the next available State Board of Education action agenda for further review of the evidentiary hearing transcript prior to making

a final decision regarding the case. The rationale for review of the case was the high negative impact on students.

- e. On September 12, 2024, Educator Utley's attorney appeared before the State Board. Mr. Utley did not appear.
- f. Educator Utley's attorney and the PLSB made oral arguments to the Board.
- g. 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 made the following findings, conclusions and determinations by a preponderance of the evidence.
- h. The Board found that Educator Utley: The educator sent over 600 non-school related messages to a student. Some of these text messages were sent at late/evening hours. The student said she began to feel uncomfortable when the educator came to her place of employment and took photographs. There is a lengthy history of inappropriate interactions with students spanning back to 2013. The educator has previously been before the PLSB board and was issued a Letter of Caution for inappropriate interactions with students. The educator would give the student his debit card and allow her to leave campus to go get food. The educator should have known his actions were a violation of the Code of Ethics for educators. High negative impact on students.
- i. Educator Utley violated Standard 1 and Standard 2.
- j. The Board imposed the following sanction:
 - Permanent Revocation

- Assess a \$500 fine (due within 90 days of State Board Order)
- k. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Utley's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education