

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN RE THE MATTER OF:
BENJAMIN MICHAEL LIDDLE
JUNE 13, 2024

PLSB CASE NO. 24-134

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on June 13, 2024, 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 Benjamin Michael Liddle (“Educator Liddle”). Based upon Educator Liddle’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:

1) Findings of Fact

- a) The Arkansas Department of Education issued Educator Liddle a standard teaching license on June 7, 2021, valid until December 31, 2025.
- b) The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Liddle 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 January 5, 2024, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Liddle violated *Standard 1: an educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom; and 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.

Educator Liddle was notified on January 9, 2024, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.

d) After considering the investigator's report and evidence on May 3, 2024, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 1 and 2 in that Educator Liddle:

- Inappropriate interaction with student(s).
- Inappropriate communication with student(s).
- Exhibited inappropriate disposition inclusive of professional and ethical behavior.
- Violated district, state or federal policies or law.

e) The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:

(1) Probation of License for 2 years.

(2) Assess a \$250.00 fine (due within 90 days of the State Board Order);

(3) Require Educator to complete the following coursework/readings:

(a) Code of Ethics Training Provided by the PLSB (1.5 Hours)

(b) ERC23004: Code of Ethics Part One: Professional Relationships (.5 Credit Hour)

(c) Title: The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence (208p)

Author: Dacher Keltner ISBN 10: 0143110292 ISBN 13: 978-0143110293

(d) Title: Addressing Appropriate and Inappropriate Teacher-Student

Relationships: A Secondary Education Professional Development Model

Author: Ernest J. Zarra, III, Kern High School District Publication:

CLEARvoz Journal Vol. 3, No. 2 (2016) Link:

<http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/article/viewFile/26/29>

(4) Educator to provide written reflection on each book/training on how they will impact the educator's future communication and interactions with students.

Due to the PLSB for approval within 90 days of the State Board Order.

(5) Require Educator to pay all associated costs.

f) On May 3, 2024, Educator Liddle was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by secure email. Educator Liddle 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.

g) At today's meeting, the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation and supporting documentation were presented to the Board as part of its consent agenda.

2) 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 Benjamin Liddle for his violation of the Code of Ethics.

b) Educator Liddle is cautioned that his non-payment of the assessed fine of \$250.00 may result in the suspension of his license until the fine is paid in full.

c) Educator Liddle 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 Liddle'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