

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE THE MATTER OF:
ABIGAIL L. JONES
DECEMBER 12, 2024**

PLSB CASE NO. 24-166

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on December 12, 2024, the Arkansas State Board of Education (“Board”) reviewed the findings of the Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee (“Ethics Subcommittee”) for disciplinary action regarding Abigail L. Jones (“Educator Jones”), who was working as a preservice teacher at the time of the alleged ethics violations. 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 February 2, 2024, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Jones violated Standards 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;
- b. Educator Jones was notified on February 6, 2024, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- c. 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 Jones:

- 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.
- d. The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
- (1) Level III Public Notification of Ethics Violation for three (3) years followed by a Level II Public Notification of Ethics Violation for two (2) years;
 - (2) Assess a \$500.00 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) Title: The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success -- No Nonsense, No Excuses (256p) Author: Linda Galindo ISBN 10: ISBN 13: 9780470500163
 - (c) ERC23006: Code of Ethics Part Three: Social Media (1 Credit Hour)
 - (d) Title: The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence (208p) Author: Dacher Keltner ISBN 10: 0143110292 ISBN 13: 978-0143110293
 - (e) Title: Flipping the Switch: Unleash the Power of Personal Accountability Using the QBQ! (144 p) Author: John G. Miller ISBN 10: 0399152334 ISBN 13: 978-0399152337

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

(4) Educator to provide written reflection on each book/training on how they will impact her future interactions with students due to the PLSB for approval within 30 days prior to the end of her suspension for suspension removal;

(5) While on probation, quarterly reports from the educator's supervisor on how her interactions with students are progressing; and

(6) Require Educator to pay all associated costs.

- e. The educator rejected the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation and requested an evidentiary hearing. On October 22, 2024, educator Jones' withdrew her request for an evidentiary hearing and accepted the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation.
- f. The case was placed on the November 7, 2024, State Board of Education consent agenda. The Board voted to move the case to the December 12, 2024, State Board of Education action agenda for further review of the case before making a final decision. The rationale for the review was that the sanction recommended did not align with the sanctioning matrix.
- g. On December 12, 2024, Educator Jones and her attorney did not appear before the Board.
- h. The PLSB presented a statement to the Board.
- i. Based on 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.

(1) The Board found that:

(a) Educator Jones violated Standards 1 and 2 of the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.


(b) The Board listed the following rationale: Inappropriate communication via text message with student that was sexual in nature, exchange of photographs that were sexual in nature, planning a relationship after student graduates, and conduct under the sanctioning matrix rises to Level IV Public Notification.

j. The Board imposed the following sanction:

- Level IV Public Notification of Ethics Violation.

k. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Jones'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