

THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN RE THE MATTER OF:

AYLA SMARTT

DECEMBER 12, 2024

PLSB CASE NO. 25-009

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER

At its regular meeting on December 12, 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 Ayla Smartt (“Educator Smartt”). Based upon Educator Smartt’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 Smartt a standard five-year teaching license on January 6, 2022, valid until December 31, 2026.
- b) The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Smartt 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 12, 2024, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Educator Smartt 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; and Standard 8: an educator, while on school premises or at school-sponsored activities involving students, refrains from: a) using, possessing and/or being under the influence of alcohol or unauthorized drugs/substances, and/or possessing items prohibited by law, b) possessing or using tobacco or tobacco-related products, e-cigarettes, e-liquid, or vapor products, or c) abusing/misusing prescription medications or other authorized substances as evidenced by impairment.

- d) Educator Smartt was notified on July 17, 2024, of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate this allegation.
- e) After considering the investigator's report and evidence on November 1, 2024, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found that a preponderance of evidence existed to substantiate violation of Standards 1, 2, and 8 in that Educator Smartt:
- 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.
 - Under the influence at school.
 - Possessed alcohol at school.
- f) The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board take the following actions:
- (1) Suspension of License for 2 years followed by a Probation of License for 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 by PLSB Staff
 - (b) Title: The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence (208p)

Author: Dacher Keltner ISBN 10: 0143110292


(c) Title: The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success -- No Nonsense, No Excuses (256p) Author: Linda Galindo ISBN 13: 9780470500163

- (4) Educator to provide written reflections on each training/book regarding how the educator will improve her interactions with students in the future. Due to the PLSB for approval 30 days prior to the end of suspension for suspension removal;
 - (5) A letter stating the educator is fit for the classroom submitted by a licensed healthcare professional 30 days prior to the end of suspension for suspension removal. Quarterly updates of the educator's recovery throughout the suspension and probation;
 - (6) Quarterly reports while on probation from the educator's supervisor regarding the educator's progress on professional practices; and
 - (7) Require Educator to pay all associated costs.
- g) On November 1, 2024, Educator Smartt was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's initial determination and recommendation by secure email. Educator Smartt 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.

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 Ayla Smartt for her violation of the Code of Ethics.
- b) Educator Smartt is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$500.00 may result in the continued suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.
- c) Educator Smartt 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 Smartt'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