

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
March 12, 2015

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
RE: ERIC MARQUIS WILLIAMS; LICENSE WAIVER REQUEST

At its meeting on March 12, 2015, the Arkansas State Board of Education (Board) heard Eric Marquis Williams's request for a waiver of a disqualifying offense for teacher licensing under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410. Based upon the testimony and evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-101 et seq., the Board hereby states as follows:

1. Findings of Fact:

- a. Eric Marquis Williams holds a provisional technical permit issued on August 1, 2014, and expiring on July 31, 2015.
- b. As part of the criminal background check for employment the Department discovered that in Oklahoma in 2008, he pled guilty or nolo contendere to the offense of child abuse by injury.
- c. The Department informed Mr. Williams by certified mail that he had a disqualification for licensing and employment in a public school. Mr. Williams was also informed of his right to a hearing before the State Board to request a waiver.
- d. Mr. Williams requested a waiver and was present at the hearing. The Board considered:
 - i. The educator's age at the time of the offense;
 - ii. The circumstances surrounding the offense;
 - iii. The length of time since the offense;

- iv. The educator's subsequent work history;
 - v. The educator's employment and character references; and
 - vi. Other evidence demonstrating that the applicant does not pose a threat to the health or safety of school children or school personnel.
- e. A motion was made to grant Mr. Williams' request for a waiver for employment and licensure and allow the Department to issue an appropriate license if all other eligibility requirements have been established. Any license issued will be conditioned for one (1) year upon Mr. Williams not pleading guilty, nolo contendere, or being found guilty of any further disqualifying offenses under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410 as evidenced by a background check at the end of the one-year period, and his adherence to Arkansas Department of Education Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators. The Board's vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

2. Conclusions of Law:

- a. The State Board of Education may consider certain enumerated offenses as a disqualification for licensing and employment. See Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-17-410(c), 6-17-410(d)(A)(5) and 6-17-411. This includes offenses which have been expunged, sealed, and pardoned by the governor.
- b. Upon consideration of the evidence presented at the meeting and pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, 6-17-410 and 25-15-201 et seq., the Arkansas State Board of Education waives Eric Marquis Williams' disqualifying offense for the purposes of licensing and employment eligibility. If Mr. Williams otherwise meets the

requirements for licensing, the Department may issue him a license as set out in paragraph 1(e).

IT IS SO ORDERED.


Samuel Ledbetter, Chair
State Board of Education