

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 12, 2015**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
IN RE DEBRA KIM HELM, PLSB CASE NO. 15-144**

At its regular meeting on November 12, 2015, 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 Debra Kim Helm (“Educator Helm”). Based upon Educator Helm’s failure to respond to the Ethics Subcommittee’s recommendation and the evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-101 et seq., the Board hereby states as follows:

I. Findings of Fact:

- a. The Arkansas Department of Education issued Educator Helm a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2011 valid until December 31, 2015.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Helm violated the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators (“Code of Ethics”) promulgated pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § § 6-17-422 and 6-17-428.
- c. On May 1, 2015, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into the allegation that Educator Helm violated Standard 8: An educator refrains from using, possessing and/or being under the influence of alcohol or unauthorized drugs/substances and/or possessing items prohibited by law, or possessing or using tobacco or tobacco-related products while on school premises or at school-sponsored activities involving students.

- d. On May 7, 2015, Educator Helm was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate the allegation.
- e. On August 7, 2015, after considering the investigator's report and evidence, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found reasonable belief that Educator Helm violated Standard 8 of the Code of Ethics by:

- Being under the influence of alcohol while on school premises and in the presence of students.

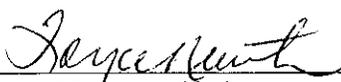
The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the Board suspend Educator Helm's license for one (1) year, assess a fine of \$100, require proof that she has completed an alcohol treatment program (AA or equivalent) with proof of her attendance submitted quarterly to the PLSB, require proof that she has completed a certified alcohol rehabilitation program, and provide a letter from a licensed therapist stating that she is fit to return to the classroom. The foregoing must be completed prior to Educator Helm's return to the classroom and all costs must be paid by Educator Helm.

- f. On August 11, 2015, Educator Helm was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail.
- g. Educator Helm did not respond to the recommendation and she did not request a hearing, thereby waiving her right to any further notice, hearing, or any other rights she might 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.

II. Conclusions of Law:

- a. Upon consideration of the evidence presented at the meeting and pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-11-105, 6-17-401, 6-17-422, 6-17-428 and 25-15-201 et seq., and the Code of Ethics, the Board adopts the of the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendations.
- b. Accordingly, the Board admonishes Educator Helm for her violation of the Code of Ethics, orders the suspension of Educator Helm's license for one (1) year, assesses a fine of \$100, require proof that she has completed an alcohol treatment program (AA or equivalent) with proof of her attendance submitted quarterly to the PLSB, require proof that she has completed a certified alcohol rehab program, and require her to provide a letter from a licensed therapist stating that she is fit to return to the classroom. The foregoing must be completed prior to Educator Helm's return to the classroom and all costs must be paid by Educator Helm.
- c. Educator Helm is cautioned that further violations of the Code of Ethics or failure to pay the fine within ninety (90) days may result in more severe discipline, including permanent revocation of her license.
- d. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Helm's professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Toyce Newton, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education