

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
APRIL 9, 2015**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
IN RE BETTY JEAN EDWARDS, PLSB CASE NO. 14-138**

At its regular meeting on April 9, 2015, the Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) accepted the recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee for disciplinary action against the teaching license of Betty Jean Edwards. Based upon Ms. Edwards' failure to respond to the subcommittee's recommendation and the evidence presented, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Ark. Code Ann. 25-15-101 et seq., the State Board hereby states as follows:

I. Findings of Fact:

- a. The Arkansas Department of Education issued Betty Jean Edwards a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2011, valid until December 31, 2015.
- b. The Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Ms. Edwards 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. The subcommittee authorized an investigation into allegations that Ms. Edwards violated Standards 1, 2, and 6: 1) An educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom; 2) An educator maintains competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter, and/or pedagogical practice; and 6) An educator keeps in confidence information about students and colleagues obtained in

the course of professional service, including secure standardized test materials and results, unless disclosure serves a professional purpose or is allowed by law.

- d. Ms. Edwards was notified on April 9, 2014, of the subcommittee's authorization on April 7, 2014, to investigate this allegation.
- e. After considering the investigator's report and evidence on August 1, 2014, the subcommittee unanimously found that reasonable belief existed to substantiate a violation of Standards 1 and 2 as follows:
 1. An educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom.
 - After instructing a student to take his foot off a desk, when the educator discovered he had again placed his foot on the desk, she pushed the student's leg.
 2. An educator maintains competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter, and/or pedagogical practice.
 - Educator called a parent to advise that she could not provide the services written in the student's IEP; and
 - Educator failed to meet with content teachers to discuss what options could be taken to assist those students in improving their grades.

The subcommittee recommended that the State Board place Ms. Edwards' license on suspension for three (3) years and assess a fine of \$100.

- f. Ms. Edwards through her attorney was notified of the subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation on August 5, 2014, by certified and regular mail.
- g. Ms. Edwards rejected the subcommittee's recommendation on August 26, 2014, and requested an Evidentiary Hearing under the Administrative Procedure Act including those rights set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 25-15-212.

- h. The evidentiary hearing was held December 5, 2014, and the subcommittee unanimously upheld the initial determination and recommendation.
- i. Ms. Edwards, through her attorney on February 5, 2015, rejected the evidentiary hearing recommendation and requested a State Board of Education Review. Neither Ms. Edwards nor her attorney filed the written objections and brief within ten (10) days of her rejection and request as required the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.
- j. At today's meeting, the subcommittee's recommendation and supporting documentation are presented to the State 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 Arkansas State Board of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators, the State Board adopts the recommendations of the subcommittee.
- b. Accordingly, the State Board orders suspension of Betty Jean Edwards' license for three (3) years and assesses a fine of \$100.
- c. Ms. Edwards is cautioned that further violations of the Code of Ethics or failure to pay the fine within thirty (30) days may result in more severe discipline including permanent revocation of her license.
- d. This order shall remain permanently in Ms. Edwards' professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Samuel Ledbetter, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education