

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
APRIL 14, 2016**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
IN RE RICKY L. COPELAND; PLSB CASE NO. 16-056**

At its regular meeting on April 14, 2016, 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 Ricky L. Copeland (“Educator Copeland”). Based upon Educator Copeland’s acceptance of 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 finds that the Educator Copeland’s license should be permanently revoked. The Board hereby states as follows:

I. Findings of Fact:

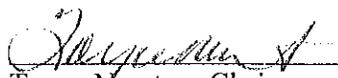
- a. The Arkansas Department of Education issued Educator Copeland a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2012, valid until December 31, 2016.
- b. The Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee (“Ethics Subcommittee”) received an allegation that Educator Copeland violated 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 December 4, 2015, the Ethics Subcommittee authorized an investigation into the allegations that Educator Copeland violated Standard 1: An educator maintains a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom.
- d. On December 10, 2015, Educator Copeland was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee’s authorization to investigate the allegation.

- e. On February 5, 2016, after considering the investigator's report and evidence, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found reasonable belief that Educator Copeland violated Standard 1 when he:
- Inappropriately communicated with a student via text messaging.
- The Ethics Subcommittee determined that the Board revoke Educator Copeland's license.
- f. On February 10, 2016, Educator Copeland was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail.
- g. Educator Copeland accepted the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation on February 29, 2016, thereby waiving his right to any notice, hearing, and any other rights he might be entitled to under the Administrative Procedure Act including those set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-15-211 and 212.

II. Conclusion of Law:

- a. The Administrative Procedure Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-208 (b), provides for the resolution of this matter by consent order.
- b. The Board voted unanimously to permanently revoke Educator Copeland's license.
- c. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Copeland'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

I, Ricky L. Copeland, **ACCEPT** the recommendation for PLSB Case No. 16-056.

(Sign) Ricky Copeland Date 2-29-2016

I, Ricky L. Copeland, **REJECT** the recommendation and request an evidentiary hearing:

(Sign) _____ Date _____

RECEIVED PLSB

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By: DMT

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