

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MAY 12, 2016**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER  
IN RE BECKY ANN WATKINS, PLSB CASE NO. 16-055**

At its regular meeting on May 12, 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 Becky Ann Watkins (“Educator Watkins”). Based upon Educator Watkins’ 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:

**I. Findings of Fact:**

- a. The Arkansas Department of Education issued Educator Watkins a standard five-year teaching license on January 1, 2015, valid until December 31, 2019.
- b. The Ethics Subcommittee received an allegation that Educator Watkins 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 allegation that Educator Watkins 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 December 9, 2015, Educator Watkins was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's authorization to investigate the allegation.
- e. On March 4, 2016, after considering the investigator's report and evidence, the Ethics Subcommittee unanimously found reasonable belief that Educator Watkins violated Standard 8 of the Code of Ethics by:
- Using, possessing, and/or being under the influence of alcohol while on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity

The Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the Board suspend Educator Watkins' license for three (3) years, assess a fine of \$100.00, and require that she participate in an alcohol rehabilitation program during the period of her suspension; require her to submit proof to the PLSB office of her participation and progress in an alcohol rehabilitation program on a quarterly basis; require her to submit a letter to the PLSB office from a licensed counselor stating that she is fit to return to the classroom within thirty (30) days of the end of the suspension period. All associated costs paid by Educator Watkins.

- f. On March 7, 2016, Educator Watkins was notified of the Ethics Subcommittee's reasonable belief determination and recommendation by certified and regular mail.
- g. Educator Watkins did not respond within the required thirty (30) day time period, thereby waiving her right to any notice, hearing, and any other rights she might be entitled to under the Administrative Procedure Act including those set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 36-15-211 and 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 Watkins for her violation of the Code of Ethics, orders the suspension of Educator Watkins' license for three (3) years, assesses a fine of \$100.00, and requires that she participate in an alcohol rehabilitation program during the period of her suspension; requires her to submit to the PLSB office, proof of her participation and progress in an alcohol rehabilitation program on a quarterly basis; requires her to submit to the PLSB office, a letter from a licensed counselor stating that she is fit to return to the classroom within thirty (30) days of the end of the suspension period. All associated costs paid by Educator Watkins.
- c. Educator Watkins is cautioned that her non-payment of the assessed fine of \$100.00 will result in the continued suspension of her license until the fine is paid in full.
- d. Educator Watkins 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.

- e. This order shall remain permanently in Educator Watkins' professional licensure file and the confidential files of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



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Toyce Newton, Chair  
Arkansas State Board of Education