

Subcommittee for the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education,
Certification and Licensure and Development
Room 117, Woolfolk Building
501 N. West Street, Jackson, MS 39201
August 12, 2021

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-3-2(10) and 25-41-5, a subcommittee of the members of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development (“Commission”) met at 9:00 a.m. on August 12, 2021, in the Room 117 of the Woolfolk Building, 501 N. West Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

Members in Attendance: Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson, Dr. Shelly Simmons, and Jamie Creel
Commission Counsel: Erin Meyer, Special Assistant Attorney General
Hawley Robertson, Special Assistant Attorney General

OEM Counsel: David Minton, Special Assistant Attorney General

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Personnel Attending:
Scott Dejong, Director for Office of Educator Misconduct (OEM)

Others in Attendance:
Varshar Dandekar
Thomas Ward
Amelia Willis, Attorney for Thomas Ward
Kelsey Atkinson

Matters before the Subcommittee:

I. Agreed Orders

Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson, serving as presiding officer for the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 9:04 a.m.

Scott Dejong, Director for the Office of Educator Misconduct, presented two proposed Agreed Orders for ratification by the Commission Hearing Subcommittee:

- A. Ashlee Welch, Education License No. 310469, Standard 4.
- B. Shonsheerae Butts, Education License No. 177459, Standard 4.

Following the presentation by OEM, Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee accept and ratify the proposed Agreed Orders. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to accept and ratify the above listed matters.

This matter concluded at 9:10 a.m.

II. **Case of Varshar Dandekar, Educator License No. 174639**

Erin Meyer, legal advisor/hearing officer to the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 9: 13 a.m.

After all exhibits were received into evidence and testimony heard, Jamie Creel moved that the subcommittee go into closed session to determine the necessity to go into executive session. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into closed session.

Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee go into executive session for deliberation and findings concerning the license of the above identified Educator. Jamie Creel seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into executive session. The following individuals remained in the room: Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson, Dr. Shelly Simmons, Jamie Creel, Hawley Robertson, and Erin Meyer.

During Executive Session, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee took the following action:

Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee grant the reinstatement of the Petitioner's Educator License No. 174639 Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion, and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously approved the reinstatement of the Petitioner's Educator License.

On a motion by Jamie Creel, seconded by Dr. Shelly Simmons, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

In open session, counsel read the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to the participants.

The presiding officer pronounced the conclusion of the hearing at 9:30 a.m.

III. **Case of Thomas Ward, Educator License No. 192846**

Erin Meyer, legal advisor/hearing officer to the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 10:43 a.m.

After all exhibits were received into evidence and testimony heard, Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee go into closed session to determine the necessity to go into executive session. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into closed session.

Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee go into executive session for deliberation and findings concerning the license of the above identified Educator. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing

Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into executive session. The following individuals remained in the room: Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson, Dr. Shelly Simmons, Jamie Creel, Hawley Robertson, and Erin Meyer.

During Executive Session, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee took the following action:

Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee grant the Petitioner's request for reinstatement of Educator License No. 192846. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion, and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously denied the reinstatement of Educator License No. 192846.

On a Motion by Jamie Creel, seconded by Dr. Shelly Simmons, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

In open session, counsel read the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to the participants.

The presiding officer pronounced the conclusion of the hearing at 11:33 a.m.

IV. Case of Kelsey Atkinson, Educator License No. 265136

Erin Meyer, legal advisor/hearing officer to the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 1:19 p.m.

After all exhibits were received into evidence and testimony heard, Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee go into closed session to determine the necessity to go into executive session. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into closed session.

Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee go into executive session for deliberation and findings concerning the license of the above identified Educator. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into executive session. The following individuals remained in the room: Dr. Debra Mays-Jackson, Dr. Shelly Simmons, Jamie Creel, Hawley Robertson, and Erin Meyer.

During Executive Session, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee took the following action:

Jamie Creel moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee grant the Petitioner's request for reinstatement of Educator License No. 265136; however, the Petitioner's educator license will be immediately placed on probation for two years. Additionally, during her probationary period, the Petitioner, at her own expense, shall take a minimum of three courses, one on the student/teacher relationship and its boundaries, one on educator ethics, and one dealing with student behavioral issues in the classroom, and shall submit proof of

attendance and successful completion of the required courses of study to the Office of Educator Misconduct. During her probationary period, upon securing employment as an educator in a school district, the Petitioner shall engage with an education mentor and shall submit quarterly progress reports (March 30, June 30, September 30, and December 31) from said mentor to the OEM. Failure to submit quarterly reports by the deadline shall result in immediate revocation of the Petitioner's license without the necessity of a hearing for a period of one year. Additionally, any reported violation(s)/allegation(s)/infraction(s) of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics Standards of Conduct and/or state or federal law during the probationary period shall result in immediate revocation of the Petitioner's license without the necessity of a hearing for a period of one year. During her probationary period, the Petitioner shall disclose the terms of her probation with any school district, including, but not limited to, the superintendent of the district and principal of the school she is employed with. Dr. Shelly Simmons seconded the motion, and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously approved the reinstatement of Educator License No. 265136, with probationary conditions.

On a Motion by Jamie Creel, seconded by Dr. Shelly Simmons, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

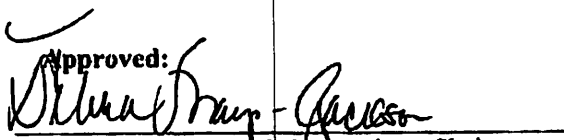
In open session, counsel read the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to the participants.


The presiding officer pronounced the conclusion of the hearing at 2:50 p.m.

V. Adjournment.

On a motion by Jamie Creel, seconded by Dr. Shelly Simmons, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to adjourn for the day at 2:50 p.m.

Approved:

Approved:

Debra Mays-Jackson, Subcommittee Chair
Commission on Teacher and Administrator
Education, Certification and Licensure and
Development


Cory Murphy, Ph.D., Executive Secretary
Commission on Teacher and Administrator
Education, Certification and Licensure and
Development