

BEFORE THE KANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of
the Application of
Celia Nelson

KSDE No. 23-PPC-35

FINAL ORDER

NOW, on this 12th day of December 2023, the above-captioned matter comes for consideration by the Kansas State Board of Education (Board). Appearing for the Board are Chairwoman, Melanie Haas, and members, Betty Arnold, Dennis Hershberger, Michelle Dombrosky, Cathy Hopkins, Deena Horst, Jim McNiece, Ann Mah, Jim Porter and Danny Zeck.

WHEREUPON the Professional Practices Commission (Commission) considered the matter on November 3, 2023. Celia Nelson appeared on her behalf. The Kansas State Department of Education appeared through its attorney, R. Scott Gordon. After reviewing the evidence, the Commission voted **6 – 0**, to recommend the Board grant the professional teaching license subject to public censure.

WHEREUPON the Board reviewed the Commission's Initial Order. The Board adopted the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law by a vote of **10 – 0**.

All findings set forth in the Commission's Initial Order attached hereto are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Final Order as though fully set forth at length herein.

IT IS THEREFORE CONCLUDED by the Kansas State Board of Education that Celia Nelson's professional teaching license is granted subject to public censure.

This Final Order is made and entered this 12th day of December 2023.

Kansas State Board of Education



BY: Jim Porter, Vice Chairman
Signed December 13, 2023

NOTICE TO LICENSEE/APPLICANT

This is a Final Order and is effective upon service.

To request reconsideration of this order, you must file a Petition for Reconsideration with the Secretary to the State Board of Education, at the address below, within 15 days after service of this Final Order. The Petition must state the specific grounds upon which relief is requested.

To request a stay of effectiveness of this order, you must file a Petition for Stay with the Secretary to the State Board of Education at the address below. A petition can be filed until the time which a petition for judicial review would no longer be timely.

To seek judicial review of a Final Order, you must file a petition in the District Court as authorized by K.S.A. 77-601, *et seq.* within 30 days following the service of the Final Order. Filing a Petition for Reconsideration is not a prerequisite for seeking judicial review. A copy of any Petition for Judicial Review must be served upon the Secretary to the State Board of Education at the address below.

Deborah Bremer
Secretary, Kansas State Board of Education
Landon State Office Building
900 SW Jackson Ave. Suite 600N
Topeka, Kansas 66612

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 14th day of December 2023, a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing was mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to:

Celia Nelson
1620 N. Brunswick
Wichita, Kansas 67212

And via interoffice mail to:

R. Scott Gordon
Kansas State Department of Education
900 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612



Deborah Bremer, Secretary
Kansas State Board of Education

**BEFORE THE KANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMISSION**

In the Matter of
the Application of
Celia Nelson

23-PPC-35

INITIAL ORDER

The above-captioned case comes on for hearing before the Professional Practices Commissioner (“Commission”) of the Kansas State Board of Education (State Board) upon the application of Celia Nelson (“Applicant”) for an Initial Teaching License.

The hearing on this matter was held on October 2, 2023. Appearing for the Commission were chairperson, Jennifer Holt, and members, Aaron Edwards, Leigh Ann Rogers, Carey Spaulding, Jamie Wetig, and Christy Ziegler. The Kansas State Department of Education (“KSDE”) appeared by and through General Counsel, R. Scott Gordon. Applicant appeared on her own behalf.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On June 22, 2020, Applicant pled guilty to and was convicted of misdemeanor theft after having previously been charged with felony burglary, felony criminal damage to property, and harassment by telephone. At the time of her criminal conduct, Applicant held an Initial Teaching License issued by the Kansas State Board of Education and had been licensed since 2014.
2. Applicant testified that her criminal misconduct was the result of a highly emotional separation from her fiancé` during which she took a laptop computer from his residence and destroyed it.
3. Applicant testified that she has since sought treatment as well as a leave of absence from her job(s) teaching to which she has since returned.
4. Applicant provided two letters of support from coworkers.
5. The offense for which the Applicant was convicted occurred approximately 3 years ago.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

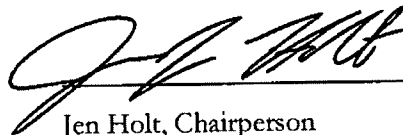
1. The Kansas State Board of Education (State Board) is responsible for the general supervision of Kansas education, including the certification and licensure of teachers. Kan. Const., Art. VI and K.S.A. 72-255.

2. The Commission believes the Applicant has clearly demonstrated a present recognition of the wrongfulness of her conduct and has expressed remorse for that conduct.
3. The Commission finds the Applicant has provided evidence of rehabilitation since the time of her misconduct.
4. The Commission finds Applicant was truthful and forthcoming in disclosing her criminal conviction on his application.
5. The Commission finds Applicant's behavior has ceased to be a factor in her fitness for licensure and that she is suitable to be placed in a position of public trust.
6. The Commission finds Applicant can be a suitable role model for students if provided that opportunity, and that the license requested by Applicant does not offer an opportunity to engage in conduct similar to her previous misconduct, but believes some level of discipline is appropriate since Applicant was licensed as a teacher at the time of her criminal misconduct.

THEREFORE the Professional Practices Commission recommends to the State Board, by a vote of 6-0, that Applicant's requested license be granted subject to public censure.

This Initial Order is made and entered this November, 2023.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMISSION



Jen Holt, Chairperson

Order signed on November 29, 2023.

NOTICE TO APPLICANT

This Order is not a Final Order and is required to be reviewed by the Kansas State Board of Education in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas Administrative Procedure Act. The State Board will review all issues. Notice of review with the specific date and time will be provided to the parties within 15 days of the review.

You may submit to the State Board for its consideration as part of its review of the Initial Order a written brief citing legal authority as to why the above recommendation should not be accepted. You must file the brief with the State Board Secretary at the address indicated below within ten calendar days after service of the Initial Order for transmittal to the State Board. You must also make any request for oral argument at that time.

Deborah Bremer
Secretary, Kansas State Board of Education
900 SW Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, KS 66612

Response briefs are due within ten calendar days after service of the legal brief upon the opposing party. Any reply brief is due five calendar days after service of any response brief upon the opposing party. Any response or reply briefs must also be filed with the State Board Secretary at the address indicated above.

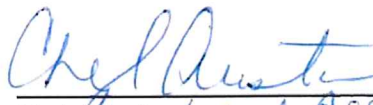
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 30th day of November, 2023 a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing was filed with the Secretary for the Kansas State Board of Education and one (1) copy was mailed by first-class prepaid postage mail, to:

Celia Nelson
1620 N. Brunswick
Wichita, KS 67212

And via interoffice mail to:

R. Scott Gordon
Kansas State Department of Education
900 SW Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612



Marisa Seele *Legal Assistant*
Secretary, Professional Practices Commission