

BEFORE THE TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of the	)	STIPULATION OF FACTS,
Teaching License of	)	ORDER OF SUSPENSION
LOU ANN MASON	)	AND PROBATION
	)	

On or about February 12, 2000, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (Commission) received a report from Steve Waddell, Superintendent, Suislaw School District that Lou Ann Mason had removed items that belonged to the school district at the end of the previous school year. The report also indicated that on March 5, 1999, Lou Ann Mason resigned her teaching position effective June 10, 1999, completing the school year. The Lane County District Attorney's Office prosecuted Ms. Mason for theft of school property. She plead guilty to the charge of Theft I in Lane County Circuit Court on September 25, 2000, pursuant to a Deferred Adjudication Agreement.

Ms. Mason fully cooperated with the Commission's investigation and did not contest the allegations. After review of the matters alleged, Ms. Mason and the Commission agree that their respective interests, together with the public interest, are best served by a stipulation to certain facts and the imposition of a six (6) month suspension of Ms. Mason's right to apply for a teaching license. The Commission will impose a probation of two (2) years upon the issuance of a teaching license. This Order sets forth the facts upon which the parties have agreed and the sanction to be imposed. In entering into this stipulation, Ms. Mason waives the right to a hearing to contest the finding of fact, conclusion of law and order set forth below. Ms. Mason understands that the probation will be subject to specific conditions.

This stipulation is contingent upon approval and adoption of the Order by the Commission. If the Commission does not adopt this Order, neither Ms. Mason nor the Commission are bound by these Stipulations and Ms. Mason retains all rights to a hearing on the allegations.

## STIPULATION OF FACTS

1. TSPC licensed Ms. Mason beginning in October of 1993. On June 26, 1997, TSPC issued a Basic Oregon Teaching License to Ms. Mason with Basic Elementary and Standard General Business Education Endorsements, this license expired on February 2, 2001.

2. Ms. Mason was employed by the Suislaw School District as an elementary school teacher from September 1998 until her resignation in lieu of non-renewal effective June 10, 1999.

3. Suffering from extreme situational stress and wanting to maintain her connection to her classroom and teaching, when she left the Siuslaw School District, Ms. Mason took from her classroom some instructional materials, equipment, and teaching aids belonging to the District. A majority of these materials, worth approximately \$1,000, were recovered by the District.

4. On September 25, 2000, Ms. Mason accepted full responsibility for her actions by entering into a deferred adjudication agreement with the State. Pursuant to that agreement, Ms. Mason successfully completed the corrective course for the crime of theft and paid unitary assessment costs and restitution to the Siuslaw School District in the amount of \$1,038. Successful fulfillment of these terms and conditions of the deferred adjudication agreement is scheduled to result in a dismissal of all charges by the State on June 29, 2001.

5. Prior to her resignation, at her own initiative, Ms. Mason sought treatment from her primary care physician concerning migraines and extreme situational stress she was experiencing leading-up to her resignation. After she took the instructional materials from the District, Ms. Mason voluntarily sought a referral from her primary care physician to a psychologist. She has, since then, sought the treatment of a psychiatrist.

6. Ms. Mason accepts responsibility for her behavior and acknowledges her behavior was inappropriate.

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## ULTIMATE FINDINGS OF FACT

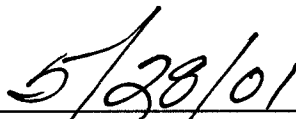
Ms. Mason's behavior constitutes serious and material inattention to or breach of professional responsibilities in violation of state law, district policy and Standards for Competent and Ethical Performance of Oregon Educators.


## CONCLUSION OF LAW


Ms. Mason violated OAR 584-020-0040(4)(o) when she removed property belonging to Siuslaw School.

IT IS SO STIPULATED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lou Ann Mason

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David V. Myton Executive Director  
Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ORDER

Based upon the foregoing the Commission suspends Lou Ann Mason's right to apply for Teaching License for a period of six (6) months beginning July 13, 2001. At the end of this suspension period, Ms. Mason's Teaching License shall be reinstated providing she meets the following conditions:

1. submission of a complete application with required supporting documentation and fees; and
2. Ms. Mason shall provide to the Commission a documentation that she has he has undergone an evaluation by a psychotherapist or medical professional acceptable to the Commission, and the evaluator submits a written report to the Commission attesting that Ms. Mason is medically stable, mentally and physically fit to serve as a licensed educator. Any costs associated with the assessment or treatment will be the responsibility of Ms. Mason.

Upon the issuance of a teaching license to Lou Ann Mason, the Commission will impose a two (2) year probation subject to the following condition:

Ms. Mason shall comply with all Standards for Competent and Ethical Performance under Chapter OAR 584, Division 020.


Violation of the terms of this probation may constitute an independent basis for the Commission to impose discipline, up to and including revocation of Ms. Mason's teaching license, subject Ms. Mason's right to a hearing on the issue of whether she violated probation.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of July 2001

TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

By:   
David V. Myton, Executive Director

Approved as to form:

  
Aruna Masih, OSB #97324  
Attorney for Lou Ann Mason