

1 advised with regard to his rights thereto, or waives any and all rights to consult with an attorney prior
2 to entering into this Stipulation and Final Order and issuance and entry of the Stipulated Final Order
3 below.

4 **STIPULATION OF FACTS**

- 5 1) Whitaker has been licensed as an Educator in Oregon since July 5, 2012. Whitaker holds a
6 Preliminary Teaching License, with an endorsement in English Language Arts (PK-12), valid from
7 May 23, 2016, through February 9, 2019. During all relevant times, Whitaker was employed by
8 the Pilot Rock School District.
- 9 2) On May 26, 2016, the Commission received a report from PRSD advising that Whitaker was the
10 subject of an investigation related to conduct that may be considered gross neglect of duty or gross
11 unfitness. The report alleges Whitaker engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a student,
12 engaged in conduct that approximates grooming behaviors, and displayed inappropriate teacher /
13 student boundaries. The district report indicated that due to the nature of the investigation, they
14 reported the allegations to local law enforcement who also conducted an investigation.
- 15 3) On or about the beginning of the 2015-2016 school, Whitaker asked school administrators if FR, (a
16 16 year old, female student) could move into Whitaker's home. Whitaker explained that he was
17 friends with FR's family and only had a professional relationship with FR. Due to difficulties in
18 FR's home, Whitaker agreed to make the request. District officials advised Whitaker that such a
19 request was inappropriate, Whitaker was counseled about proper student/teacher boundaries, and
20 warned not to allow himself to be placed in any compromising positions.
- 21 4) On May 22, 2016, school officials became aware that Whitaker's vehicle was seen during the early
22 morning hours at FR's mother's residence. Witnesses observed Whitaker leave the residence with
23 FR driving another vehicle. Because Whitaker's conduct appeared suspicious when combined with
24 his prior request to have FR live with him, officials notified local law enforcement who conducted
25 an investigation.
- 26 Investigation determined that beginning in the summer of 2015, Whitaker had engaged in an
27 inappropriate relationship with FR. Forensic examination of cell phones and social media

1 applications indicated inappropriate communications between Whitaker and FR. These
2 communications included references to Whitaker and FR being in love with each other,
3 discussions about their future together, FR wanting to be “the future Mrs. Whitaker”, and
4 arrangements for FR to enter Whitaker’s residence through a side door. FR described that she had
5 a crush on Whitaker and that they cared about each other, but stated that they were not sexually
6 involved. . It was learned that FR occasionally came to Whitaker’s residence alone and sometimes
7 stayed late into the evening playing video games and talking. FR reported that she had sent
8 Whitaker a topless photograph of herself when she had been intoxicated at a friend’s house. The
9 photo was unsolicited by Whitaker, and FR reported that Whitaker was angry that she had sent it.
10 Whitaker told investigators that three months into the 2013 school year, his principal fostered an
11 uncomfortable emotional connection between him and FR by asking him to mentor and support
12 FR after she had attempted self-harm. Whitaker was aware FR later developed a crush on him,
13 and Whitaker mistakenly allowed the emotional relationship to develop. Whitaker admitted to
14 giving FR hugs, communicating inappropriately, expressing romantic feelings for each other, and
15 having FR alone at his residence. Whitaker stated he did not engage in any sexual communications
16 or conduct with FR and investigation did not reveal any. Law enforcement elected not to file
17 criminal charges against Whitaker. The district’s investigation concluded that Whitaker’s conduct
18 was inappropriate and violated school district policies. Whitaker resigned his employment
19 effective May, 31, 2016 and relocated out of the area.

20 IT IS SO STIPULATED:

21 Christopher Whitaker

22 Christopher Whitaker

10/2/17

Date

23 Trent Danowski

24 Trent Danowski, Co-Interim Executive Director

25 Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

10/12/17

Date

26
27

1 **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

2 Christopher Whitaker 's conduct described above constitutes gross neglect of duty in violation
3 of ORS 342.175(1)(b); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(n) as it incorporates OAR 584-020-0010(5) (*Use*
4 *professional judgment*), OAR 584-020-0025(2)(e) (*Using district lawful and reasonable rules and*
5 *regulations*); and OAR 584-020-0040(4)(o) as it incorporates, OAR 584-020-0035(1)(b)(*Refrain*
6 *from exploiting professional relationships with any student for personal gain, or in support of*
7 *persons or issues*), OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(A) (*Not demonstrating or expressing professionally*
8 *inappropriate interest in a student's personal life*), OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(B) (*Not accepting or*
9 *giving or exchanging romantic or overly personal gifts or notes with a student*), OAR 584-020-
10 0035(1)(c)(C) (*Reporting to the educator's supervisor if the educator has reason to believe a student*
11 *is or may be becoming romantically attached to the educator*), and OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(D)
12 (*Honoring appropriate adult boundaries with students in conduct and conversations at all times*).

13 The Commission's authority to impose discipline in this matter is based upon ORS 342.175.

14 **ORDER**

15 The Commission hereby adopts and incorporates herein the above stipulation of facts,
16 conclusions of law, and based thereon hereby imposes a one (1) year suspension upon Whitaker's
17 Oregon educator license as follows:

18 Christopher Whitaker's Oregon educator license is hereby suspended for one year following
19 the adoption of this order.

20 Furthermore, the Commission imposes a four (4) year period of probation upon Whitaker to
21 commence upon reinstatement of his Oregon educator license and subject to the following terms and
22 conditions of probation:

- 23 1. Whitaker shall comply with the Standards for Competent and Ethical Performance of
24 Oregon Educators under Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 584, Division 020.
- 25 2. Whitaker has provided a favorable psychosexual evaluation / treatment report
26 completed May 1, 2017, from an approved provider, meeting commission standards for
27 such.

- 1 3. Beginning in November 2016, Whitaker has actively participated in psychotherapy to
2 address his conduct and will continue any recommended counseling or treatment
3 related to his treatment plan. Whitaker will report his continued compliance with same
4 to TSPC every 6 months for 2 years (i.e. during the 1st year of suspension and for 1
5 additional year of probation).
- 6 4. Whitaker will participate in a TSPC-approved boundary class prior to any
7 reinstatement of his licensure and submit proof of his successful completion to the
8 Commission as a condition of reinstatement.


9 Violation of any term or condition of probation shall constitute an independent basis for the
10 Commission to revoke Whitaker's Oregon educator license or otherwise impose discipline, after first
11 providing Whitaker with notice and opportunity for hearing

12

13 IT IS SO ORDERED this 9th day of November, 2017.

14 TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

15

16 By: 
17 Trent Danowski, Co-Interim Executive Director