## 1 BEFORE THE TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION 2 OF THE STATE OF OREGON 3 In the Matter of the STIPULATION OF FACTS AND 4 Educator License of FINAL ORDER OF 5 PUBLIC REPRIMAND HEATHER N. OLSON 6 7 On January 21, 2016, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission 8 (Commission) received a report from the Beaverton School District indicating possible 9 professional misconduct on the part of licensed educator, Heather N. Olson (Olson). 10 After review of the matters alleged, Olson and the Commission agree that their 11 respective interests, together with the public interest, are best served by a stipulation to 12 certain facts, the imposition of a Public Reprimand, and a period of probation. 13 This Order sets forth the facts upon which the parties have agreed and the 14 sanction to be imposed. Olson stipulates that there are sufficient facts contained in the 15 Commission's files and records to support the findings of fact and conclusions of law set 16 forth below. In entering into this stipulation, Olson waives the right to a hearing to 17 contest the findings of fact, conclusions of law and order set forth below. 18 By signing below, Olson acknowledges, understands, stipulates, and agrees to the 19 following: (i) she has been fully advised of her rights to notice and a hearing to contest 20 the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order set forth below, and fully and finally 21 waives all such rights and any rights to appeal or otherwise challenge this Stipulation of 22 Facts and Final Order of Public Reprimand and Probation (Stipulation and Final Order); 23 (ii) this Stipulation and Final Order is a public document and disclosed to the public 24 upon request by the Commission; (iii) this Stipulation and Final Order is contingent 25 upon and subject to approval and adoption by the Commission. If the Commission does 26 not approve and adopt this Stipulation and Final Order, then neither Olson nor the 27 Commission are bound by the terms herein; (iv) she has fully read this Stipulation and 28 Final Order, and understands it completely; (v) she voluntarily, without any force or 29 duress, enters into this Stipulation and Final Order and consents to issuance and entry of 30 the Stipulated Final Order below; (vi) she states that no promise or representation has 31 been made to induce her to sign this Stipulation and Final Order; and (vii) she has

the Stipulated Final Order below.

attorney prior to entering into this Stipulation and Final Order and issuance and entry of

consulted with an attorney regarding this Stipulation and Final Order and has been fully

advised with regard to her rights thereto, or waives any and all rights to consult with an

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## STIPULATION OF FACTS

- The Commission has licensed Olson since September 16, 2004. Olson holds a
  Professional Teaching License, with endorsements in English Language Arts (PK12), Foundational Social Studies (PK-12), and Legacy Middle Level (PK-12), valid
  from May 2, 2017, through March 10, 2022. During all relevant times, Olson was
  employed by the Beaverton School District.
  - 2. On January 21, 2016, the Commission received a report from the Beaverton School district indicating Olson may have committed acts which constitute gross neglect of duty. Beaverton School District reported that on or about November 2015, Olson had repeatedly engaged in inappropriate conversation with students regarding Olson's views on science verses religion.
  - 3. Investigation determined that during the month of November 2015 and into December 2015, Olson was teaching a unit on the Great Enlightenment and government to her eighth-grade class. In response to a direct question from one student regarding politics and religion, Olson shared her personal perspective in a manner that this student and then others felt belittled their religious views.
  - 4. Despite being notified of the November concern by the student's parent and administrator, Olson returned to the subject of religion and science during a December class discussion relating to *Twelfth Night*. Olson's actions negatively impacted several students, one of which left Olson's classroom in tears and sought support from the school counselor. Multiple other students complained that Olson's comments made them feel uncomfortable and viewed Olson's conduct as specifically directed at the one student in the classroom because of her religious beliefs.
  - 5. Some of the statements Olson made to the student in class include:
    - "Religious people are statistically less educated than non-religious people."
    - "Religion was started in Asyrian times as a way to control people" which
      was referencing the first documented time a political leader claimed to be
      a descendant of God."
    - "I respect your beliefs and I respect you if you think God took clay, sculpted it and blew into it and made man, I respect that." However, based on Olson's other statements, it was clear that she did not believe this to be a reasonable belief.

1 "It's illogical for you not to believe in evolution because science has 2 shown all the evidence for it." Olson asked SG if her (SG's) parents went 3 to college. When SG replied her parents went to George Fox University, 4 Olson said "I wonder what their science program is like." SG reported she 5 felt Olson was judging and demeaning her family. When asked about the 6 interaction by the District, Olson acknowledged that she could understand 7 why the student would feel that way and expressed remorse. 8 9 6. Beaverton School District administrators found that Olson's conduct created an 10 uncomfortable learning environment, used her power differential as a teacher to 11 publicly confront students, and created an imbalanced environment that was 12 counterproductive to learning. They concluded that Olson's actions were 13 detrimental to SG and other students in Olson's classroom. As a result, on 14 January 5, 2016, Olson was issued a Written Reprimand for policy violations and 15 included outlining future expectations and direction. 16 17 7. Olson accepted discipline and acknowledged that she exercised poor judgment in 18 continuing the conversation regarding religion and politics with this student. It 19 was a personally difficult year for Olson. Olson continues to teach 8th grade 20 humanities in the Beaverton School District and has had no further disciplinary 21 matters. 22 23 IT IS SO STIPULATED: 24 25 Heather N. Olson 26 27 28 29 **Teacher Standards and Practices Commission** 

CONCLUSION OF LAW

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The conduct described above constitutes gross neglect of duty in violation of ORS 342.175(1)(b); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(n) as it incorporates OAR 584-020-0010(1) (Recognize the worth and dignity of all persons and respect for each individual), OAR 584-020-0010(5) (Use professional judgment), (OAR 584-020-0030(2)(b) (Skill in

1	communicating with administrators, students, staff, parents, and other patrons), and
2	OAR 584-020-0030(3)(d) (Skill in reconciling conflict).
3	The Commission's authority to impose discipline in this matter is based upon
4	ORS 342.175.
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6	ORDER
7	The Commission adopts and incorporates herein the above findings of fact and
8	conclusions of law, and based thereon, imposes a Public Reprimand on Heather N.
9	Olson's Oregon educator license.
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11	Issued and dated this day of August, 2019.
12	TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION
13	STATE OF OREGON
14	$\Lambda$
15	By
16	Dr. Anthony Rosilez, Executive Director
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