



## STIPULATION OF FACTS

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

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- “It’s illogical for you not to believe in evolution because science has shown all the evidence for it.” Olson asked SG if her (SG’s) parents went to college. When SG replied her parents went to George Fox University, Olson said “I wonder what their science program is like.” SG reported she felt Olson was judging and demeaning her family. When asked about the interaction by the District, Olson acknowledged that she could understand why the student would feel that way and expressed remorse.

6. Beaverton School District administrators found that Olson’s conduct created an uncomfortable learning environment, used her power differential as a teacher to publicly confront students, and created an imbalanced environment that was counterproductive to learning. They concluded that Olson’s actions were detrimental to SG and other students in Olson’s classroom. As a result, on January 5, 2016, Olson was issued a Written Reprimand for policy violations and included outlining future expectations and direction.

7. Olson accepted discipline and acknowledged that she exercised poor judgment in continuing the conversation regarding religion and politics with this student. It was a personally difficult year for Olson. Olson continues to teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade humanities in the Beaverton School District and has had no further disciplinary matters.

IT IS SO STIPULATED:

Heather N. Olson  
Heather N. Olson

7/3/19  
Date

Trent Danowski  
Trent Danowski, Deputy Director  
Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

7/8/19  
Date

**CONCLUSION OF LAW**

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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**ORDER**

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The Commission adopts and incorporates herein the above findings of fact and  
conclusions of law, and based thereon, imposes a Public Reprimand on Heather N.  
Olson's Oregon educator license.

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Issued and dated this 12 day of August, 2019.

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**TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION**

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**STATE OF OREGON**

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By 

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Dr. Anthony Rosilez, Executive Director

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