## 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** 5 DARLA M. BELL SUSPENSION AND PROBATION 6 7 On April 10, 2023, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission 8 (Commission) received a School District Misconduct Report from the Willamette 9 Education Service District (WESD), indicating possible professional misconduct on the 10 part of licensed educator, Darla M. Bell (Bell). 11 After review of the matters alleged, Bell and the Commission agree that their 12 respective interests, together with the public interest, are best served by a stipulation to 13 certain facts and the imposition of a one (1) year suspension and four (4) years 14 probation. 15 This Order sets forth the facts upon which the Commission and Bell have agreed 16 and the sanction to be imposed. Bell stipulates that there are sufficient facts contained 17 in the Commission's files and records to support the findings of fact and conclusions of 18 law set forth below. In entering into this stipulation, Bell waives the right to a hearing to 19 contest the findings of fact, conclusions of law and order set forth below. 20 By signing below, Bell acknowledges, understands, stipulates, and agrees to the 21 following: (i) she has been fully advised of her rights to notice and a hearing to contest 22 the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order set forth below, and fully and finally waives all such rights and any rights to appeal or otherwise challenge this Stipulation of 23 24 Facts and Final Order of Suspension and Probation (Stipulation and Final Order); (ii) this Stipulation and Final Order is a public document and disclosed to the public upon 25 26 request by the Commission; (iii) this Stipulation and Final Order is contingent upon and subject to approval and adoption by the Commission. If the Commission does not 27 approve and adopt this Stipulation and Final Order, then neither Bell nor the 28 29 Commission are bound by the terms herein; (iv) she has fully read this Stipulation and 30 Final Order, and understands it completely; (v) she voluntarily, without any force or 31 duress, enters into this Stipulation and Final Order and consents to issuance and entry of 32 the Stipulated Final Order below; (vi) she states that no promise or representation has 33 been made to induce her to sign this Stipulation and Final Order; and (vii) she has consulted with an attorney regarding this Stipulation and Final Order and has been fully 34 advised with regard to her rights thereto, or waives any and all rights to consult with an 35

1	attorney prior to entering into this Stipulation and Final Order and issuance and entry	of
2	the Stipulated Final Order below.	
3		
4	STIPULATION OF FACTS	
5	1. The Commission has licensed Bell since February 19, 2016. Bell holds a	
6	Preliminary Teaching License with endorsements in English Language Arts (PK	_
7	12), valid from December 13, 2022, through December 25, 2025. During all	
8	relevant times, Bell was employed by the Willamette Education Service District	
9	(WESD).	
10		
11	2. On April 10, 2023, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC)	
12	received a School District Misconduct Report from the Superintendent of WESI	),
13	Dave Novotney, alleging misconduct by Bell, a former WESD educator.	
14	Specifically, the report alleges that on March 13, 2023, the Salem Police	
15	Department (SPD) contacted the Marion County Juvenile Detention Facility	
16	(MCJDF) where Bell had previously been assigned by the WESD as an educator	
17	for incarcerated youth. SPD relayed to WESD staff that Bell might have engaged	l
18	in "boundary violating" behavior with a juvenile youth who was formerly one of	
19	Bell's students.	
20		
21	3. According to the WESD and TSPC investigations, the following events related to	)
22	the above allegations were substantiated:	
23	<ul> <li>On November 17, 2022, Bell "accepted treats" (food) from a male studer.</li> </ul>	ıt
24	who requested that she give the treats to a female student in another	
25	class, in a different section of the facility.	
26	<ul> <li>During the WESD investigation into this matter, Bell admitted that the</li> </ul>	
27	students who were passing treats to one another were boyfriend-	
28	girlfriend.	
29	<ul> <li>During the WESD investigation, Bell admitted that food was highly</li> </ul>	
30	regulated inside MCJDF. She also told WESD investigators that while sh	ıe
31	did not understand the food regulations at the time, she acknowledged	
32	that she had violated facility rules by transferring snacks from one stude	nt
33	to another.	
31	On January a good Crotchen Brunner Evacutive Director for the Scho	ما

1 of Improvement Services for the WESD received information that Bell had 2 visited her in-custody students on her personal time on December 25, 3 2022 at MCJDF without obtaining the proper clearance from WESD. 4 It was further noted in the WESD investigation that during the same visit 5 to MCJDF on December 25, 2022, Bell brought in several printed books for students without prior authorization from WESD, gave students hugs, 6 7 and visited with students in two different units. 8 During the WESD investigation, Bell also admitted that on December 25, 9 2022 she met with a male student (SS-M) for approximately 30 minutes 10 in the presence of a guard and three other students. Bell indicated that 11 she spoke to SS-M about several personal topics such as coping with a 12 family member with cancer and going through a divorce. 13 Per WESD records, Bell entered into a resignation agreement with the 14 district on February 13, 2023 which was effective immediately. 15 On March 13, 2023, the WESD received correspondence from MCJDF 16 Director Chuck Sybrandt that contained approximately fifteen (15) pages 17 of photocopies of handwritten letters that Bell had exchanged, after her 18 resignation from WESD, with two in-custody students identified as JN and RM. Some of the letters were written between JN and RM but Bell 19 20 relayed the letters between them. Some of the letters were written by Bell

2223

24

25

2627

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

21

4. On September 19, 2023, Bell was interviewed by TSPC investigative staff in the presence of her attorney, Elizabeth Joffe. During the interview Bell admitted to engaging in the majority of the conducted listed above. The conduct Bell admitted to included sharing commissary between students, bringing in personal books for students, hugging students, and visiting student SS-M on personal time on Christmas (December 25, 2022). Bell admitted to TSPC investigative staff that she had spoken to SS-M about personal topics such as one of her family members having cancer, and about her divorce. Bell reported that she spoke to SS-M about these things because she knew him better than the other students as he had been there longer. Bell also told TSPC investigators that WESD was aware that she had previously ordered books many times for her students had been reimbursed by

and provided to JN or RM and discussed topics of a personal nature,

including Bell's WESD employment investigation and resignation.

1 the WESD for them and was never told they had to be reviewed or approved by 2 anyone else. Bell had ordered the books she brought on December 25, 2022 3 intending to give them to the students before Winter Break so they had reading 4 material during break, but reported that they did not arrive until after the break 5 began, so she delivered them during Winter Break. She admitted that she had not 6 received specific authorization to deliver them to students during Winter Break. 7 Bell reported that the investigation did not reveal that any of the books contained 8 improper content. Bell also reported that prior to giving any hugs to students, she 9 asked the guards on duty and each student if she could give hugs. Bell concluded 10 her interview by denying having any romantic interest in any of her students. 11 12 IT IS SO STIPULATED: 13 14 Darla M. Bell 15 16 17 Cristina Edgar, Director of Professional Practices **Teacher Standards and Practices Commission** 18 19 20 CONCLUSION OF LAW 21 The conduct described above constitutes gross neglect of duty in violation of ORS 22 342.175(1)(b); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(n) as it incorporates OAR 584-020-0010(5) (Use 23 professional judgment), (OAR 584-020-0025(2)(e) (Using district lawful and 24 reasonable rules and regulations), and OAR 584-020-0040(4)(0) as it incorporates 25 OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(D) (Honoring appropriate adult boundaries with students in 26 conduct and conversations at all times). 27 28 The Commission's authority to impose discipline in this matter is based upon 29 ORS 342.175. 30 ORDER 31 The Commission adopts and incorporates herein the above findings of fact and 32 conclusions of law, and based thereon, imposes a one (1) year suspension and four (4) years 33 of probation on Darla M. Bell's Oregon educator license. The period of probation is 34 subject to the following conditions:

35

1	<ol> <li>Bell shall comply with the Standards for Competent and Ethical</li> </ol>
2	Performance of Oregon Educators under Oregon Administrative Rules
3	Chapter 584, Division 020.
4	
5	2. Bell will successfully complete a Commission approved training course on
6	Boundaries (and provide proof that the course was completed to TSPC)
7	during the first year of probation.
8	
9	
10	Issued and dated this 2 day of June, 2024.
11	TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION
12	STATE OF OREGON
13	. 111 . 00 1/1
14	By All States and the states are the states and the states are the
15	Melissa Coff, Interim Executive Director