1	BEFORE THE TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION
2	OF THE STATE OF OREGON
3 4 5	In the Matter of the) STIPULATION OF FACTS AND Educator License of) FINAL ORDER OF SUSPENSION CHRISTOPHER WHITAKER) AND PROBATION
6	On or about March 26, 2016, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (Commission)
7	received a report from the Pilot Rock School District (PRSD) alleging that Christopher Whitaker
8	(Whitaker) had violated Professional Standards and Practices.
9	After review of the matters alleged, Whitaker and the Commission agree that their respective
10	interests, together with the public interest, are best served by a stipulation to certain facts, the
11	imposition of a one (1) year suspension of Whitaker's Oregon educator license, and a four (4) year
12	period of probation to commence upon reinstatement of Whitaker's Oregon educator license.
13	This document sets forth the facts upon which the parties have agreed and the stipulated
14	sanction to be imposed. Whitaker stipulates that there is sufficient evidence in the Commission's files
15	and records to support the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order set forth below.
16	By signing below, Whitaker acknowledges, understands, stipulates, and agrees to the
17	following: (i) he has been fully advised of his rights to notice and a hearing to contest the findings of
18	fact, conclusions of law, and order set forth below, and fully and finally waives all such rights and any
19	rights to appeal or otherwise challenge this Stipulation of Facts and Final Order of Suspension and
20	Probation (Stipulation and Final Order); (ii) this Stipulation and Final Order is a public document and
21	disclosed to the public upon request by the Commission; (iii) this Stipulation and Final Order is
22	contingent upon and subject to approval and adoption by the Commission. If the Commission does
23	not approve and adopt this Stipulation and Final Order, then neither Whitaker nor the Commission
24	are bound by the terms herein; (iv) he has fully read this Stipulation and Final Order, and understands
25	it completely; (v) he voluntarily, without any force or duress, enters into this Stipulation and Final
26	Order and consents to issuance and entry of the Stipulated Final Order below; (vi) he states that no
27	promises or representation has been made to induce him to sign this Stipulation and Final Order; and
28	(vii) he has consulted with an attorney regarding this Stipulation and Final Order and has been fully
	Page 1 STIPULATION OF FACTS AND FINAL ORDER OF SUSPENSION AND PROBATION—CHRISTOPHER WHITAKER

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 Page 2 STIPULATION OF FACTS AND FINAL ORDER OF SUSPENSION AND PROBATION-

CHRISTOPHER WHITAKER

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 22	Christopher Whitaker Date
23	Total Dangers 10/12/17
24 25	Trent Danowski, Co-Interim Executive Director Teacher Standards and Practices Commission Date

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)(0) 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.

completed May 1, 2017, from an approved provider, meeting commission standards for such.

2. Whitaker has provided a favorable psychosexual evaluation / treatment report

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