

BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATE OF NEBRASKA

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.)	
Commissioner of Education)	NDE Case No. 15-21
301 Centennial Mall South)	
P.O. Box 94933)	
Lincoln, NE 68509-4933,)	
)	
Petitioner,)	FINAL ORDER
)	
v.)	
)	
Ramona Hourt)	
101 Vogl Loop)	
Crawford, NE 69339,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

This matter came before the State Board of Education ("State Board"), Lincoln, Nebraska, on February 5, 2016, upon the recommendation of the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission ("NPPC") that the public school certificate of the Respondent, Ramona Hourt, be suspended for a period of one year. The parties were notified of the State Board's consideration in this matter. Appearing before the State Board was NDE Legal Counsel Scott Summers on behalf of the Commissioner of Education, and Kathi Vontz, Clerk of the NPPC. Respondent did not appear.

The record of the NPPC proceeding, containing the "Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation of the Commission," all of the pleadings, exhibits, and a written transcript of the NPPC hearing, was received by the State Board into evidence as "Exhibit 1." The Notice of Disposition was received into evidence as "Exhibit 2." Upon its independent review of the entire record, the State Board finds, concludes, and orders as follows:

1. The State Board has jurisdiction in this case pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-866(2) (2014);

2. The Petitioner is Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education, 301 Centennial Mall South, P.O. Box 94933, Lincoln, NE 68509-4933;

3. The Respondent is Ramona Hourt, 101 Vogl Loop, Crawford, NE 69339;

4. The Respondent holds a public Nebraska Standard teaching certificate number 2011008874, endorsed in Elementary Education K-6 and English Language Arts 7-12, with an expiration date of August 31, 2016;

5. The Respondent was employed by the Crawford Public Schools as an eighth grade Language Arts teacher since the 2008-2009 school year until her resignation, effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, was accepted by the Crawford School Board on February 9, 2015;

6. On or about February 3, 2015, while administering the 2015 NeSA writing assessment to eighth grade students, the Respondent took pictures of students' computer screens which contained secure test materials, examined and discussed student responses to items, provided answers to students, and placed students in a situation where they could discuss test items;

7. Based upon the factual allegation contained in paragraph 6, the Respondent has violated the following statutes and standards: Title 92, *Nebraska Administrative Code*, Chapter 27, Section 004.02H (effective date: November 12, 2003) ("the educator. . . shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties"); Section 004.03B (same effective date) ("the educator. . . shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter

for which the educator is responsible”); Section 004.03C (same effective date) (“the educator. . . shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with the learning process or are harmful to health or safety”); Section 004.03D (same effective date) (“the educator. . . shall conduct professional educational activities in accordance with sound educational practices that are in the best interest of the student”); and Section 004.04F (same effective date) (“the educator. . . shall, with reasonable diligence, attend to the duties of his or her professional position”);

8. By a preponderance of the evidence, just cause exists pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-866(2) (2014) to suspend the Respondent’s certificate for a period of one year; and

9. The public Nebraska Standard teaching certificate of Ramona Hourt, certificate number 2011008874, endorsed in Elementary Education K-6 and English Language Arts 7-12, with an expiration date of August 31, 2016, shall be suspended for a period of one year from and after the date of this order.

Dated this 5th day of February, 2016.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

BY: Rachel Wise
Rachel Wise, President

The vote by the State Board of Education to approve the Final Order in Case No. 15-21, on February 5, 2016, was 7 in favor, _____ against, _____ abstaining, and 1 absent. Individual State Board members voted as follows:

IN FAVOR: L. LARSEN, G. FLINT, R. WISE, J. WITZEL, M. NICKELS, M. O'HOLLERAN,

P. MCPHERSON

AGAINST: _____

ABSTAINING: _____

ABSENT: P. TIMM

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing Final Order was served upon Respondent Ramona Hourt, 101 Vogl Loop, Crawford, NE 69339 via United States mail; Kathi Vontz, NPPC Clerk, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lower Level, Lincoln, NE 68509, via interoffice mail; and Brian L. Halstead, Deputy Commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education, 301 Centennial Mall South, Sixth Floor, Lincoln, NE 68509, via interoffice mail, all on this 5th day of February, 2016.

Brenda L. Wid

49-1507-29