

1 BEFORE THE TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION
2 OF THE STATE OF OREGON
3

4 In the Matter of the Educator) DEFAULT ORDER OF
5 License of) REVOCATION OF
6 JAMES MICHAEL WRIGHT) RIGHT TO APPLY
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9 On April 17, 2014, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (Commission)
10 issued a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing to James Michael Wright (Wright) in which the
11 Commission charged him with Gross Neglect of Duty. The Notice was sent via U.S. First
12 Class Mail and U.S. Certified Mail Receipt 7010 2780 0000 2187 2951 to the address on file
13 with the Commission. The Notice designated the Commission file as the record for purposes
14 of proving a prima facie case. The Certified Mail receipt was returned to the Commission
15 “signed” on April 22, 2014. The first class mail was not returned to the Commission. The
16 Notice of Opportunity of Hearing, dated April 17, 2014, and signed by Victoria Chamberlain,
17 Executive Director, stated:

18 “IF A REQUEST FOR HEARING IS NOT RECEIVED WITHIN THIS 21-DAY
19 PERIOD, YOUR RIGHT TO A HEARING SHALL BE CONSIDERED WAIVED
20 UNLESS YOUR FAILURE TO REQUEST A HEARING WAS BEYOND YOUR
21 REASONABLE CONTROL. IF YOU DO NOT REQUEST A HEARING OR IF YOU
22 FAIL TO APPEAR AT A HEARING, THE COMMISSION WILL ADOPT AN ORDER
23 OF DEFAULT WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF
24 YOUR LICENSE OR OTHER DISCIPLINE.”
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26 On May 1, 2014, Wright requested a hearing. The hearing was scheduled for April 20-21,
27 2015. On April 16, 2015 Wright notified the Commission he would not appear for the
28 hearing as scheduled. The Commission, therefore, finds Wright to be in default and enters
29 the following findings of fact, conclusions of law, and final order, based on the files and
30 records of the Commission concerning this matter.
31

32 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

- 33 1. The Commission has licensed Wright since April 23, 2010. Wright previously held
34 an Initial I Teaching License valid from April 23, 2010, through June 6, 2013, with
35 endorsements in Biology (HS) and Social Studies (HS). Wright has not made
36 application for renewal of his licensure. During all relevant times, Wright was
37 employed by the McMinnville School District as a substitute teacher.

- 1
- 2 2. On February 21, 2013, the Commission received a report from the McMinnville
- 3 School District indicating Wright may have committed acts which constitute gross
- 4 neglect of duty. A subsequent investigation determined that during the 2011- 2012
- 5 school year, Wright created a fictitious Facebook profile depicting himself as a local
- 6 high school student under the name "Trashcannius Maximus". Wright explained to
- 7 investigators that he created this account to "snoop" on students, to get the real story
- 8 on drug dealing, bullying, and gang activity. Wright chose the trashcan theme of his
- 9 fake identity because other student profiles had used similar themes, and Wright
- 10 believed it would help him infiltrate the student community better. Using Wright's
- 11 fictitious profile, Wright participated in the following inappropriate conduct:
- 12 a) Wright "friended" multiple students, including a minor aged, female student
- 13 (ZH), while posing as a student himself. Wright claims he did this to monitor
- 14 students for inappropriate and illegal activities, but Wright is unable to support
- 15 this with any significant action or reporting on his part. Wright admitted that he
- 16 kept his "Trashcannius" profile a secret from everyone, including school officials
- 17 because Wright felt it was inappropriate for a teacher to be snooping on students.
- 18 b) Wright posted comments and information on Facebook, purporting to be a
- 19 student himself to gain student trust. According to involved students, this
- 20 included Wright posting information or responding to other's posts in a manner
- 21 that would constitute bullying.
- 22 c) Wright took a special interest in student ZH, who was a student in a class
- 23 Wright's wife (Audrey Wright) taught full time, and Wright knew from substitute
- 24 teaching in his wife's classroom. Wright engaged ZH in personal conversations
- 25 via the Facebook instant messaging system. These messages included
- 26 inappropriate conversations about ZH's personal life and Wright telling her he
- 27 thought she was "Cute" on occasion.
- 28 d) On multiple occasions, ZH requested that Wright reveal his identity, and Wright
- 29 refused. Once, Wright requested that ZH meet him at a coffee shop where Wright
- 30 would reveal his true identity. ZH refused to meet with Wright because she was
- 31 afraid and did not think it was safe to meet someone in that manner. Wright
- 32 eventually told ZH who he was. ZH reported she felt betrayed, uncomfortable

1 and “weird” because of Wright’s behavior. Because of Wright’s conduct, ZH
2 blocked conversations with Wright on Facebook. Wright contacted ZH from
3 other Facebook accounts that he controlled, but ZH refused to accept Wright’s
4 friend requests and told her mother about Wright’s conduct.

5 e) ZH and her mother reported Wright’s conduct to Wright’s wife, Audrey Wright.
6 ZH and her mother requested that Wright not have any contact with ZH in the
7 future. Wright’s wife did not report Wright’s behavior to school officials or other
8 authorities. Wright did not stop substituting in ZH’s classroom. When Wright
9 did substitute in ZH’s classroom, ZH either did not show up for class or did her
10 studies in another classroom in order to avoid contact with Wright because she
11 felt so uncomfortable.

12 f) During interviews, Wright admitted he was “obviously” not emotionally well
13 equipped to handle teaching, he was not well equipped to teach, and Wright “was
14 late to the maturity party”. Wright stated he never intended to harm ZH, and the
15 situation had snowballed and “got beyond him”.
16

17 CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

18 James Michael Wright engaged in unprofessional conduct as described in section two
19 (2) above. Wright’s conduct detailed above, constitutes gross neglect of duty in violation of
20 ORS 342.175(1)(b); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(n) as it incorporates OAR 584-020-0010(5) (*Use*
21 *professional judgment*); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(o) as is incorporates OAR 584-020-
22 0035(1)(b) (*Refrain from exploiting relationships with any student for personal gain, or in*
23 *support of persons or issues*), OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(A) (*Not demonstrating or*
24 *expressing professionally inappropriate interest in a student's personal life*), OAR 584-020-
25 0035(1)(c)(B) (*Not accepting or giving or exchanging romantic or overly personal gifts or*
26 *notes with a student*), and OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(D) (*Honoring appropriate adult*
27 *boundaries with students in conduct and conversation at all times*).
28

29 The Commission’s authority to impose discipline in this matter is based upon ORS
30 342.175.

1
2 **FINAL ORDER**

3 The Commission hereby revokes James Michael Wright's right to apply for an
4 Educator licensure.

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6 IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 20th day of April, 2015.

7 TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION



8 By: _____
9 Victoria Chamberlain, Executive Director

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11 **NOTICE OF APPEAL OR RIGHTS**

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13 YOU ARE ENTITLED TO JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THIS ORDER. JUDICIAL REVIEW
14 MAY BE OBTAINED BY FILING A PETITION FOR REVIEW WITHIN 60 DAYS FROM
15 THE SERVICE OF THIS ORDER. JUDICIAL REVIEW IS PURSUANT TO THE
16 PROVISIONS OF ORS 183.482 TO THE OREGON COURT OF APPEALS.