

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
REPORT OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE  
OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE

IN THE MATTER OF CHARGES OF UNPROFESSIONAL  
CONDUCT AGAINST DUSTIN C RALPH

The hearing committee of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Alberta Teachers' Association reports that charges of unprofessional conduct laid against Dustin C Ralph of [REDACTED] were duly investigated in accordance with the *Teaching Profession Act*. The hearing was held in Barnett House, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on Thursday, January 10, 2013, at 0900.

Professional Conduct Committee members present as the hearing committee were [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] presented the case against the investigated member. The investigated member, Dustin Ralph, was not present and was not represented by counsel.

CONSTITUTION/JURISDICTION

There were no objections to the composition of the hearing committee or its jurisdiction to hear the case.

CHARGES AND PLEA

The following charges were read by the secretary to the hearing committee:

1. Dustin C Ralph is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, during the period December 2009 to April 2011, sent sexually explicit text messages to students, thus failing to treat the students with dignity and respect.
2. Dustin C Ralph is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, during the 2009/10 school year, sent a sexually explicit photograph to a student, thus failing to treat the student with dignity and respect.
3. Dustin C Ralph is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, during the period March 2010 to April 2011, requested sexually explicit photographs of students, thus failing to treat the students with dignity and respect.

4. Dustin C Ralph is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, on one or more occasions during the period April 2010 to April 2011, invited a student to meet him outside of appropriate student/teacher professional boundaries, thus failing to maintain the honour and dignity of the profession.
5. Dustin C Ralph is charged with unprofessional conduct pursuant to the *Teaching Profession Act* in that he, while a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, in April 2010, inappropriately touched a student, thus failing to treat the student with dignity and respect.

The investigated member entered a plea of guilty to each of the charges, by written submission.

#### WITNESSES

No witnesses were called but evidence was submitted through an agreed statement of facts.

#### EXHIBITS FILED

- Exhibit 1—Declaration of awareness of rights, signed by Ralph, dated December 14, 2012
- Exhibit 2—Notice of hearing and Canada Post confirmation of delivery on November 13, 2012
- Exhibit 3 Submission on plea, signed by Ralph, dated December 14, 2012
- Exhibit 4 Agreed statement of facts, signed by Ralph and [REDACTED], dated December 10, 2012
- Exhibit 5 Proof of Ralph's membership in the Association, letter dated January 7, 2013
- Exhibit 6 Joint submission on penalty, signed by Ralph and [REDACTED], dated December 10, 2012

#### EVIDENCE ADDUCED AND EXHIBITS FILED INDICATED THAT:

1. Ralph was born on [Date Redacted](Exhibit 4).
2. Ralph was employed by [School Division Redacted] starting in January 2005 (Exhibit 4).
3. Ralph taught at [School Redacted] during the time of the incidents giving rise to the charges (Exhibit 4).
4. Ralph was a member of the Association from January 1, 2005 to August 31, 2011 (Exhibit 5).



Report of the Hearing Committee of PCC re Ralph, page 3

5. In April 2011, the superintendent of the school division received a copy of a parent statement that had been provided to the RCMP regarding texts exchanged between [children] and Ralph (Exhibit 4).
6. The RCMP conducted an investigation and did not lay any charges. (Exhibit 4).
7. Ralph was suspended from teaching on May 1, 2011 and resigned his employment on August 11, 2011 (Exhibit 4).

Charge 1

1. During the period of December 2009 to April 2011, Ralph regularly sent text messages, many of which were sexually explicit, to two students who will be referred to as Student A and Student B in this report. Also, during the 2010/11 school year, Ralph sent similar text messages to another student who will be referred to as Student C (Exhibit 4).
2. The messages became progressively more sexual in nature, with Ralph asking students about their sexual experiences; describing himself as horny; describing his own sexual experiences; and describing, in graphic detail, sexual acts he would like to perform on the students (Exhibit 4).
3. He also requested that the students describe to him what sexual acts they would perform on him (Exhibit 4).
4. Ralph sent many of the text messages at night (Exhibit 4).
5. During the 2010/11 school year, Ralph exchanged hundreds of messages with Student C (Exhibit 4).

Charge 2

1. During the 2009/10 school year, Ralph sent a photograph of his genitalia to Student B (Exhibit 4).

Charge 3

1. On at least two occasions, between March 2010 and April 2011, Ralph requested sexually explicit photographs of Student A. [Gender Redacted] sent him pictures of [personal Information]
2. Student B also sent him a photograph of [GenderRedacted][Personal Information].
3. During the 2010/11 school year, Ralph asked Student C for a picture and [Gender redacted] responded by sending Ralph a photograph of [Gender redacted] in [Gender redacted] underwear. Ralph repeated his request and offered to send [Gender redacted] a picture of him. [Gender redacted] declined his offer.

Charge 4

1. On more than one occasion, during evening hours, Ralph attempted to arrange private meetings with Student B.
2. He offered to pick [Gender redacted] up to "hang out" and, in another request, he asked [Gender redacted] to meet him somewhere where no one would see them.
3. During a [Sport redacted] tournament in the 2010/11 school year, Ralph invited Student C and two of [Gender redacted] friends to his hotel room to watch a movie, asking them not to tell others. In the end, a number of [students] and a second teacher watched a movie in Ralph's hotel room.

Charge 5

1. In April 2010, while alone in a classroom with Student A, Ralph placed his hand on [Gender redacted] thigh. The student did not react and Ralph removed his hand commenting that it was weird and that the door was open and someone might see.

DECISION OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE

Charge 1—guilty

Charge 2—guilty

Charge 3—guilty

Charge 4 guilty

Charge 5—guilty

### REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Ralph admitted and pled guilty to (a) exchanging sexually explicit text messages and photographs with students, (b) attempting to arrange private liaisons with the students and (c) touching one student on the thigh.
2. By his own admission, Ralph failed to treat the three students with dignity and respect.
3. Ralph created inappropriate relationships with students, relationships that exceeded acceptable teacher-student boundaries.
4. Ralph engaged in conversations with students via text messaging which he purposefully escalated to become sexually explicit in nature.
5. Students have the right to feel safe and respected as individuals. Ralph violated the trust of students through both his words and actions.
6. Ralph depersonalized the students and treated them as objects for his own sexual gratification.
7. Ralph betrayed the trust that students, parents and the public have a right to expect of teachers, specifically that teachers will treat students with dignity and respect and with consideration for their circumstances.
8. Ralph's conduct was reported to the RCMP by the parents of two of the students. By betraying the trust of students and parents, Ralph brought dishonour to himself and to his profession.
9. The honour and dignity of the teaching profession is harmed by a teacher having inappropriate relationships with students.

### PENALTY

The hearing committee imposes the following penalty to address all five charges:

1. Ralph is declared ineligible for membership in the Association.
2. A recommendation will be forwarded to the minister of education to cancel Ralph's teaching certificate.

REASONS FOR PENALTY

1. Ralph's egregiously inappropriate behaviour occurred repeatedly, during two consecutive school years, and involved three students.
2. Ralph broke the fundamental trust that society places in teachers.
3. Ralph's intentional and predatory behaviour makes him unworthy of membership in the teaching profession. In order to protect students, Ralph must be expelled from the profession.

Dated at the City of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, Thursday, January 10, 2013.

HEARING COMMITTEE OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE  
OF THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

