

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services Access to the Public Records of the Reports of Decisions

This Reports of Decisions document was retrieved from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services website. These records are open to public view under Wisconsin's Open Records law, sections 19.31-19.39 Wisconsin Statutes.

Please read this agreement prior to viewing the Decision:

- The Reports of Decisions is designed to contain copies of all orders issued by credentialing authorities within the Department of Safety and Professional Services from November, 1998 to the present. In addition, many but not all orders for the time period between 1977 and November, 1998 are posted. Not all orders issued by a credentialing authority constitute a formal disciplinary action.
- Reports of Decisions contains information as it exists at a specific point in time in the Department of Safety and Professional Services data base. Because this data base changes constantly, the Department is not responsible for subsequent entries that update, correct or delete data. The Department is not responsible for notifying prior requesters of updates, modifications, corrections or deletions. All users have the responsibility to determine whether information obtained from this site is still accurate, current and complete.
- There may be discrepancies between the online copies and the original document. Original documents should be consulted as the definitive representation of the order's content. Copies of original orders may be obtained by mailing requests to the Department of Safety and Professional Services, PO Box 8935, Madison, WI 53708-8935. The Department charges copying fees. *All requests must cite the case number, the date of the order, and respondent's name* as it appears on the order.
- Reported decisions may have an appeal pending, and discipline may be stayed during the appeal. Information about the current status of a credential issued by the Department of Safety and Professional Services is shown on the Department's Web Site under "License Lookup."

The status of an appeal may be found on court access websites at:

<http://ccap.courts.state.wi.us/InternetCourtAccess> and <http://www.courts.state.wi.us/wscca>

- Records not open to public inspection by statute are not contained on this website.

By viewing this document, you have read the above and agree to the use of the Reports of Decisions subject to the above terms, and that you understand the limitations of this on-line database.

Correcting information on the DSPS website: An individual who believes that information on the website is inaccurate may contact DSPS@wisconsin.gov

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

THOMAS E. ECKELS, S.W.,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
:
:
:

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

ORDER 0007003

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 SOC 051

The parties to this action for the purpose of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Thomas E. Eckels, S.W.
Nekoosa, WI 54457

Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional
Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board
P.O. Box 8366
Madison, WI 53708-8366

Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 7190
Madison, WI 53707-7190

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of this matter, subject to the approval of the Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (Section). The Section has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Section in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent Thomas E. Eckels, S.W., (DOB xx/xx/1959) is credentialed in the state of Wisconsin to practice social work, having credential number 932-120, first issued on September 7, 1993. This credential expired on February 28, 2019 and has not been renewed. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.08(3), Respondent retains the right to renew upon payment of a fee until February 27, 2024. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is in Nekoosa, Wisconsin 54457.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was employed as a social worker at a counselor center (Center), located in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

3. On July 30, 2018, the Department received a complaint alleging Respondent crossed boundaries by sending text messages at inappropriate times and admitting to having personal feelings for a Client A's mother.

4. Respondent stated that since he had planned to retire, has no plans to renew his expired license, and does not expect to practice social work in the future, he has opted to surrender his right to renew.

5. In resolution of this matter, Respondent consents to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law and Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board has jurisdiction to act in this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26, and is authorized to enter into the attached Stipulation pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.

2. The voluntary SURRENDER of the right to renew the license to practice social work in the state of Wisconsin issued to Respondent (credential no. 932-120) is accepted.

3. In the event Respondent petitions the Section for reinstatement as a social worker in the future, the Section may enter an order denying such petition without further notice or hearing. Whether to grant a credential and whether to impose limitations or restrictions on any credential granted shall be in the discretion of the Section.

4. Any petitions for reinstatement and payment of costs, if applicable, shall be sent to the Department Monitor at the address below:

Department Monitor
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 7190, Madison, WI 53707-7190
Telephone (608) 267-3817; Fax (608) 266-2264
DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov

You may also submit this information online via DSPS' Monitoring Case Management System, here:

<https://dpsmonitoring.wi.gov>

5. This Order is effective on the date of its signing.

SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE WISCONSIN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY,
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

by: Candace Coates L.P.
A Member of the Section

9/15/2020
Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

THOMAS E. ECKELS, S.W.,
RESPONDENT.

STIPULATION
ORDER 0007003

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 SOC 051

Respondent Thomas E. Eckels, S.W., and the Division of Legal Services and Compliance, Department of Safety and Professional Services stipulate as follows:

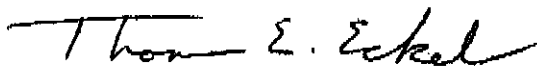
1. This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending investigation by the Division of Legal Services and Compliance. Respondent consents to the resolution of this investigation by Stipulation.
2. Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation, Respondent voluntarily and knowingly waives the following rights:
 - the right to a hearing on the allegations against Respondent, at which time the State has the burden of proving those allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
 - the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against Respondent;
 - the right to call witnesses on Respondent's behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena;
 - the right to testify on Respondent's own behalf;
 - the right to file objections to any proposed decision and to present briefs or oral arguments to the officials who are to render the final decision;
 - the right to petition for rehearing; and
 - all other applicable rights afforded to Respondent under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and other provisions of state or federal law.
3. Respondent is aware of Respondent's right to seek legal representation and has been provided an opportunity to obtain legal counsel before signing this Stipulation.
4. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (Section). The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Section's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Section, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall then be returned to the Division of Legal Services and Compliance for further proceedings. In the event that the Stipulation is not accepted by the Section, the parties agree not to contend that the Section has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by the consideration of this attempted resolution.

6. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Legal Services and Compliance and any member of the Section ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Section in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent or Respondent's attorney, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Section may have in connection with deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such advisor may vote on whether the Section should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

7. Respondent is informed that should the Section adopt this Stipulation, the Section's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.

8. The Division of Legal Services and Compliance joins Respondent in recommending the Section adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.



Thomas E. Eckels, S.W., Respondent
Nekoosa, WI 54457
Credential no. 932-120

6/15/2020
Date



Lesley McKinney, Attorney
Department of Safety and Professional Services
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
P.O. Box 7190
Madison, WI 53707-7190

6/16/2020
Date