

STATE OF FLORIDA
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

RICHARD CORCORAN, AS COMMISSIONER
OF EDUCATION,

Petitioner,

vs.

Case No. 20-4020PL

THOMAS CHRISTOPHER MASTERS,

Respondent.

_____ /

RECOMMENDED ORDER

On November 9, 2020, Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) Yolonda Y. Green, of the Division of Administrative Hearings (“Division”), conducted an evidentiary hearing pursuant to section 120.57(1), Florida Statutes (2020), via Zoom Conference.

APPEARANCES

For Petitioner: Ron Weaver, Esquire
Post Office Box 770088
Ocala, Florida 34477-0088

For Respondent: Heidi B. Parker, Esquire
Egan, Lev, Lindstrom & Siwica, P.A.
231 East Colonial Drive, 2nd Floor
Orlando, Florida 32801

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

The issues in this case are whether Respondent, Thomas Masters, violated section 1012.795(1)(j), Florida Statutes, and Florida Administrative Code Rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1., as alleged in the Amended Administrative Complaint; and, if so, what disciplinary penalty should be imposed.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

On March 31, 2020, Petitioner, Richard Corcoran, as Commissioner of Education (“Petitioner” or “Commissioner”), filed an Administrative Complaint against Respondent, alleging violations of section 1012.795(1)(j) and rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1. Respondent timely filed an Election of Rights form, disputing the allegations and requesting a hearing.

On September 8, 2020, the Education Practices Commission (“EPC”) referred this matter to the Division for assignment of an ALJ. The undersigned scheduled this matter for final hearing on November 9, 2020.

Prior to the final hearing, the parties filed a Joint Pre-hearing Statement, in which they stipulated to the Amended Administrative Complaint. The Administrative Complaint was amended by striking paragraph 4 and counts 3 and 4, and striking the word “sit-ups” in paragraph 3 and inserting the word “push-ups.” In addition, to the extent relevant, the parties' stipulated facts have been incorporated in the findings below.

On November 9, 2020, the undersigned conducted the final hearing. Petitioner presented the testimony of: Justin William Palesotti (President of St. Johns Middle School Athletic Association “SJMSAA”); Randy Kosec (EPC investigator); J.M.; S.W. (parent of J.M.); and student S.P. The undersigned admitted Petitioner’s Exhibits 5 through 8 in evidence. Respondent testified on his own behalf and presented the testimony of Amber Rewis Phillips; Bettina Timmerman; Rhieanna DeGrande; Judge Robert K. Mathis (ret.); John Samuels; Ivey Brown; and Gina Gonzalez. Respondent did not offer any exhibits.

The two-volume Transcript was filed with the Division on December 3, 2020. The parties timely filed Proposed Recommended Orders (PROs), which have been considered in preparation of this Recommended Order.

Except where otherwise indicated, all references to the Florida Statutes in this Recommended Order are to the 2018 edition. *See McCloskey v. Dep't of Fin. Servs.*, 115 So. 3d 441, 444 (Fla. 5th DCA 2013)(holding that statutes and rules in effect at the time of the allegations apply, unless otherwise specified).

During the testimony of Mr. Kosec, Respondent objected to testimony of communications between Mr. Masters and Mr. Kosec during the investigation of this matter and requested that the testimony about the communication be stricken because Mr. Masters was represented by undersigned counsel in a pending case over the same subject matter.

The undersigned heard argument from both parties and reserved ruling on Petitioner's objection. Respondent argued that the content of those communications related to matters that were previously presented to the ALJ in case number 19-6071PL. Petitioner argued Respondent should have invoked his right to counsel before speaking to Mr. Kosec. The undersigned directed the parties to produce any support for their respective positions in their PROs. Respondent's argument is incorporated herein.¹ Based on the undersigned's review of the record, Respondent's objection is overruled.

¹ "Masters' right to counsel was violated when the Petitioner enacted a policy or practice that allowed Kosec to have an ex parte conversation with Masters. During the informal conference, Masters made representations to Kosec. Masters did not know that Kosec was an investigator and that his communication could be used against him in the DOE's investigation."

FINDINGS OF FACT

Based on the evidence and testimony presented at the final hearing, the following Findings of Fact are made:

Background

1. Respondent holds Florida Educator's Certificate 743504, covering the areas of Elementary Education and Physical Education, which is valid through June 30, 2024.

2. The Commissioner is the head of the state agency, the Florida Department of Education, responsible for investigating and prosecuting allegations of misconduct against individuals holding Florida educator certificates. Upon a finding of probable cause, Petitioner is then responsible for filing a formal complaint and prosecuting the complaint pursuant to chapter 120, if the educator disputes the allegations in the complaint.

3. Since 1994, Respondent has been responsible for the care and development of elementary school-aged children. He became certified to teach elementary education in Florida in 1995, and at that time began teaching physical education (P.E.) for the Archdiocese of Miami. In approximately 1999, Respondent was certified in P.E. He taught P.E. for 19 years and theology for one year. He was the Athletic Director for 18 of those 20 years.

4. In 2015, Respondent relocated from South Florida to St. Johns County to assist with the care of his mother after his father's passing. He taught P.E. in the St. Johns County School District (SJCSD) from 2015 through 2019.

5. At the time of the allegations in the Amended Administrative Complaint, Respondent was employed as a P.E. Teacher at W.D. Hartley Elementary School in the SJCSD. Mr. Masters also served as the volunteer coach for the Gamble Rogers Middle School girl's softball team, also known as the Gamble Rogers Stingrays.

6. The SJMSAA is an independent, private non-profit corporation. SJMSAA uses district middle school names and facilities under a license

agreement with the district. SJMSAA is solely responsible for the operation of the SJMSAA middle school sports programs and their individual teams. The organization's mission is to promote community citizenship, good sportsmanship, and physical and mental development through healthy, organized competition' and team work for 12 to 15-year-old middle school students.

7. SJMSAA is responsible for operation of the sports programs for 13 middle school sports teams and seven different sports. Thus, all middle school students from various schools within the district may participate in sports. The sports the SJMSAA oversees are: football, baseball, softball, golf, tennis, cheer, and soccer.

8. Middle school students J.M., H.B., and S.P. were on the SJMSAA girls' softball team Respondent coached.

Allegations in the Complaint

9. The allegations in the Amended Administrative Complaint took place during softball practice and did not involve any of Respondent's students at Hartley. The allegations stem from a complaint made by the mother of J.M. (softball team member).

10. At the time of the incident, J.M. was a middle school student at Gamble Rogers and a member of the softball team within SJMSAA. She was 13 years old at the time of the incident. J.M. is now a 15-year-old high school student.

11. On April 3, 2018, J.M. told Mr. Masters that her stomach hurt because she did not have "[any] food in her stomach." Mr. Masters then asked other players if they had any food that he could give J.M. Since none of the players had food, Mr. Masters gave J.M. a soda from his car to help her feel better. Shortly after she drank the soda, J.M. returned to practice.

12. Before practice, Mr. Masters told the girls that they must do push-ups if they drop the ball. While throwing the ball with her partner, J.M. dropped

the ball. J.M. then positioned herself to do the push-ups. Since the push-ups were modified, her hands and knees were on the ground.

13. J.M. testified that while doing the push-ups, Mr. Masters kicked her in the stomach and placed his foot on her back. She was confused and embarrassed because she did not expect him to kick her. J.M. didn't say anything after the incident, but rather, she looked at Mr. Masters with a shocked facial expression. Shortly thereafter, she returned to practice. She remained in practice for the duration, which was approximately 1.5 to two hours.

14. J.M. stated that the kick caused her stomach to hurt more, increasing the pain to 9 out of 10, with 10 being the highest level of pain. However, there was no evidence offered to establish the level of stomach pain before the incident.

15. J.M.'s teammates, S.P. and H.B., witnessed the incident. Before practice, J.M. told S.P. that she was not feeling well. Later, during warm-ups, she was standing nearby when J.M. dropped the ball. While J.M. was doing the requisite push-ups, S.P. witnessed Mr. Masters kick J.M. in the stomach. S.P. was shocked and believed Mr. Masters' actions were wrong. S.P. did not see Mr. Masters place his foot on J.M.'s back.

16. H.B. did not testify at the hearing. However, she provided a written statement to described what she witnessed on the date of the incident. Similar to S.P., H.B. stated that Mr. Masters kicked J.M. in the stomach while she was doing push-ups. Although the statement is hearsay, it further explains and is corroborated by admissible evidence in this matter.

17. S.W. arrived late to practice to pick-up her daughter, J.M. S.W. recalled that her daughter seemed as if she was not as engaged as the other team members. J.M. told her mother that Mr. Masters kicked her and placed his foot on her back while she was doing push-ups. S.W. observed that her daughter was "very upset" about the incident. S.W. believed Mr. Masters'

placement of his feet on J.M. was disrespectful. S.W. contacted the SJMSAA commissioner to report what happened to her daughter.

18. Justin Palesotti, the President of the SJMSAA, received a complaint from S.W. that Mr. Masters had inappropriately touched her daughter. Mr. Palesotti approached Mr. Masters before a softball game and asked him about the complaint. Mr. Masters told Mr. Palesotti that he swept his foot underneath J.M. while she was doing push-ups to confirm the student had space between her stomach and above the ground. After the discussion, Mr. Palesotti asked for Mr. Masters' resignation, and he complied.

19. Mr. Masters disputes J.M.'s complaint. He testified that J.M. arrived at practice and she did not look well. She told Mr. Masters that she was not feeling well because she had not eaten all day. He did not have snacks and none of the other girls had snacks, so he gave her a soda that he had in his car. After giving her the soda, he gave her the option to return to practice when she could.

20. During warm-ups he told the girls that they would need to do three push-ups if they dropped the ball. J.M. and other players had to do push-ups. When J.M. had to do push-ups she had already drunk the soda. As J.M. was doing push-ups, he was being silly to help change her mood, and "pretended to fake kick her under her stomach." J.M. unexpectedly "came down onto his foot." She then gave him a look to communicate, "are you kidding me?" He was not trying to harm J.M., but, rather, he was "kidding" with her to lighten her mood. His attempt to make J.M. feel better was not well received.

21. While he acknowledged that his foot made contact with J.M.'s stomach, he denied placing his foot on J.M.'s back.

Character Witnesses

22. The allegations were a surprise to Respondent's character witnesses who disagreed that he would kick a student.

23. Ms. Ivey Brown, the assistant softball coach at the time, testified that Mr. Masters enjoyed coaching. She had never witnessed Respondent kick a student.

24. Likewise, John Samuels who coached basketball with Mr. Masters for a few weeks at Hartley only observed positive interactions with students. Mr. Samuels described Mr. Masters as a compassionate coach who helped improve the player's self-esteem.

25. Ms. Gonzalez, another assistant coach and former player coached by Respondent, testified that Respondent was always positive and encouraged players. Even at a time when players were disciplined, including herself, he spoke to them with compassion.

26. St. Johns County Circuit Court Judge Mathis (ret.) met Mr. Masters in 2016. Judge Mathis volunteered to help coach the basketball team, of which his grandson was a member, and observed Respondent regularly interact with the students. Judge Mathis testified that Respondent had positive interactions with students, even the students who may have been difficult. He also had a reputation for helping people.

Disciplinary History

27. Although he had favorable experiences about other students, this is not the first time Mr. Masters has been subject to allegations of inappropriate contact with students. Mr. Masters was disciplined for a prior incident in *Richard Corcoran, as Commissioner of Education*, Case No. 19-6071PL, (Fla. DOAH Apr. 28, 2020; Fla. DOE Oct. 7, 2020), for his actions, filed on

September 16, 2020.² Respondent was issued a reprimand, placed on probation for 12 months, and required to pay administrative costs of \$150.00.

Ultimate Findings of Fact

28. Petitioner has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent's foot made contact with J.M.'s stomach.

29. While the undersigned acknowledges J.M.'s recollection of Mr. Masters placing his foot on her back, the other witnesses present did not recall this and Respondent disputes it. While the possibility exists that Mr. Masters placed his foot on J.M.'s back, J.M.'s uncorroborated statement is not sufficient, without more, to establish by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent placed his foot on her back.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

30. The Division has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter of this case pursuant to sections 120.569 and 120.57(1).

31. Respondent is substantially affected by Petitioner's intended decision to discipline his Florida educator's certificate and has standing to maintain this proceeding.

² The incidents in *Richard Corcoran, as Commissioner of Education*, Case No. 19-6071PL, (Fla. DOAH Apr. 28, 2020; Fla. DOE Oct. 7, 2020), occurred in November 2018 and involved findings as follows:

60. It is found that Petitioner proved by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent inappropriately lifted a female student off the ground and turned her upside down in an attempt to get her to stop crying. Petitioner also proved by clear and convincing evidence that during the 2018-2019 school year, Respondent repeatedly embarrassed B.P., a six-year-old male student, by referring to B.P. as "Big Head." None of the other allegations contained in the Administrative Complaint were proven by clear and convincing evidence. (footnote omitted).

32. The Florida Education Practices Commission is the state agency charged with the certification and regulation of Florida educators pursuant to chapter 1012.

33. This is a proceeding in which Petitioner seeks to impose discipline against Respondent's educator certification. As a result, Petitioner bears the burden of proving the specific allegations of wrongdoing that support the charges alleged in the Amended Administrative Complaint before disciplinary action may be taken against the professional license of a teacher. *Tenbroeck v. Castor*, 640 So. 2d 164, 167 (Fla. 1st DCA 1994). Because disciplinary proceedings are considered penal in nature, Petitioner must prove the allegations in the Amended Administrative Complaint by clear and convincing evidence. *Dep't of Banking & Fin. v. Osborne Stern & Co.*, 670 So. 2d 932 (Fla. 1996); *Ferris v. Turlington*, 510 So. 2d 292 (Fla. 1987).

34. Clear and convincing evidence "requires more proof than a 'preponderance of the evidence' but less than 'beyond and to the exclusion of a reasonable doubt.'" *In re Graziano*, 696 So. 2d 744, 753 (Fla. 1997). As stated by the Florida Supreme Court:

Clear and convincing evidence requires that the evidence must be found to be credible; the facts to which the witnesses testify must be distinctly remembered; the testimony must be precise and lacking in confusion as to the facts in issue. The evidence must be of such a weight that it produces in the mind of the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction, without hesitancy, as to the truth of the allegations sought to be established.

In re Davey, 645 So. 2d 398, 404 (Fla. 1994) (quoting, with approval, *Slomowitz v. Walker*, 429 So. 2d 797, 800 (Fla. 4th DCA 1983)); *see also In re Henson*, 913 So. 2d 579, 590 (Fla. 2005). "Although this standard of proof may be met where the evidence is in conflict, it seems to preclude evidence that is ambiguous." *Westinghouse Elec. Corp. v. Shuler Bros. Inc.*, 590 So. 2d 986, 989 (Fla. 1991).

35. Section 1012.796 describes the disciplinary process for educators, and provides in pertinent part:

(6) Upon the finding of probable cause, the commissioner shall file a formal complaint and prosecute the complaint pursuant to the provisions of chapter 120. An administrative law judge shall be assigned by the Division of Administrative Hearings of the Department of Management Services to hear the complaint if there are disputed issues of material fact. The administrative law judge shall make recommendations in accordance with the provisions of subsection (7) to the appropriate Education Practices Commission panel which shall conduct a formal review of such recommendations and other pertinent information and issue a final order. The commission shall consult with its legal counsel prior to issuance of a final order.

(7) A panel of the commission shall enter a final order either dismissing the complaint or imposing one or more of the following penalties:

(a) Denial of an application for a teaching certificate or for an administrative or supervisory endorsement on a teaching certificate. The denial may provide that the applicant may not reapply for certification, and that the department may refuse to consider that applicant's application, for a specified period of time or permanently.

(b) Revocation or suspension of a certificate.

(c) Imposition of an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each count or separate offense.

(d) Placement of the teacher, administrator, or supervisor on probation for a period of time and subject to such conditions as the commission may specify, including requiring the certified teacher, administrator, or supervisor to complete additional appropriate college courses or work with another certified educator, with the administrative costs of

monitoring the probation assessed to the educator placed on probation.

(e) Restriction of the authorized scope of practice of the teacher, administrator, or supervisor.

(f) Reprimand of the teacher, administrator, or supervisor in writing, with a copy to be placed in the certification file of such person.

(g) Imposition of an administrative sanction, upon a person whose teaching certificate has expired, for an act or acts committed while that person possessed a teaching certificate or an expired certificate subject to late renewal, which sanction bars that person from applying for a new certificate for a period of 10 years or less, or permanently.

(h) Refer the teacher, administrator, or supervisor to the recovery network program provided in s. 1012.798 under such terms and conditions as the commission may specify.

36. Charges in a disciplinary proceeding must be strictly construed, with any ambiguity construed in favor of the licensee. *Elmariah v. Dep't of Prof'l Reg.*, 574 So. 2d 164, 165 (Fla. 1st DCA 1990); *Taylor v. Dep't of Prof'l Reg.*, 534 So. 2d 782, 784 (Fla. 1st DCA 1988). Disciplinary statutes and rules must be construed in terms of their literal meaning, and words used by the Legislature may not be expanded to broaden their application. *Beckett v. Dep't of Fin. Servs.*, 982 So. 2d 94, 99-100 (Fla. 1st DCA 2008); *Dyer v. Dep't of Ins. & Treas.*, 585 So. 2d 1009, 1013 (Fla. 1st DCA 1991).

37. The allegations set forth in the Amended Administrative Complaint are those upon which this proceeding is predicated. *Trevisani v. Dep't of Health*, 908 So. 2d 1108, 1109 (Fla. 1st DCA 2005); *Cottrill v. Dep't of Ins.*, 685 So. 2d 1371, 1372 (Fla. 1st DCA 1996). Due process prohibits Petitioner from taking disciplinary action against a licensee based on matters not specifically alleged in the charging instruments, unless those matters have

been tried by consent. *See Shore Vill. Prop. Owner's Ass'n, Inc. v. Dep't of Envtl. Prot.*, 824 So. 2d 208, 210 (Fla. 4th DCA 2002); *Delk v. Dep't of Prof'l Reg.*, 595 So. 2d 966, 967 (Fla. 5th DCA 1992).

38. The Amended Administrative Complaint seeks to discipline Respondent on charges that he violated section 1012.795(1)(j), in pertinent part, as follows:

(1) The Education Practices Commission may suspend the educator certificate of any person as defined in s. 1012.01(2) or (3) for up to 5 years, thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students for that period of time, after which the holder may return to teaching as provided in subsection (4); may revoke the educator certificate of any person, thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students for up to 10 years, with reinstatement subject to the provisions of subsection (4); may revoke permanently the educator certificate of any person thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students; may suspend the educator certificate, upon an order of the court or notice by the Department of Revenue relating to the payment of child support; or may impose any other penalty provided by law, if the person:

* * *

(j) Has violated the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession prescribed by State Board of Education rules.

39. Count 1 cannot constitute an independent violation, but rather is dependent upon a corresponding violation of the rules constituting the Principles of Professional Conduct.

40. Counts 2 and 3 of the Administrative Complaint seeks to discipline Respondent on charges that he violated rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1.,³ which states:

(2) Florida educators shall comply with the following disciplinary principles. Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.

a) Obligation to the student requires that the individual:

1. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.

41. Petitioner established, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent violated rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1., in that Respondent failed to make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to the student's mental health, physical health, and safety.

42. Respondent argued in his PRO that he did not kick J.M., and stated:

The evidence is undisputed and uncontradicted that Masters swung his leg under JM, and JM lowered herself onto the top of Masters' foot. Palosetti did not believe that Masters' forcefully kicked JM. He believed that Masters swept his foot under JM to see if there was space between JM and the ground during a push-up. Parents, grandparents, colleagues and a former student testified that it was not in Masters' character to kick a student such that it would be harmful to the student.

³ Rule 6A-10.081 was transferred from Florida Administrative Code Rule 6B-1.006 on January 11, 2013. The penalty guidelines rule continues to cite to rule 6B-1.006 in setting penalty ranges. Rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1. is substantively similar to the last iteration of rule 6B-1.006(3)(a). Since the facts alleged and the text of the rule allegedly violated were clear for Count 2, and since there is no evidence that Respondent was misled or harmed by the citation in the penalty guidelines to a rule that is no longer in effect as numbered, the penalty guideline in rule 6B-11.007(2)(i)16. shall be applied to the violation of rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1.

43. However, using your foot to engage in any kicking motion, false or otherwise, resulting in your making contact with a student's stomach violates rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1. Although Respondent firmly explains that he was kidding around and did not intend to harm the student, his actions fell short of the standard of making a reasonable effort to protect students.

Recommended Penalty

44. Florida Administrative Code Rule 6B-11.007(2)(j)1. establishes the range of penalties for various violations of section 1012.795(1)(j) and rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1., as follows:

(2) The following disciplinary guidelines shall apply to violations of the below listed statutory and rule violations and to the described actions which may be basis for determining violations of particular statutory or rule provisions. Each of the following disciplinary guidelines shall be interpreted to include "probation," "Recovery Network Program," "restrict scope of practice," "fine," and "administrative fees and/or costs" with applicable terms thereof as additional penalty provisions in each case in which neither a suspension or revocation is imposed, the penalty shall include a letter of reprimand. The terms "suspension" and "revocation" shall mean any length of suspension or revocation, including permanent revocation, permitted by statute, and shall include comparable denial of an application for an educator's certificate.

* * *

(j) Violating the Principles of Professional Conduct in violation of Section 1012.795(1)(j), F.S., by:

1. Failing to make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health

and/or safety [subparagraph 6A-10.081(2)(a)1.,
F.A.C.] Probation – Revocation.[⁴]

45. Rule 6B-11.007(3) establishes aggravating and mitigating factors to be applied to penalties calculated under the guidelines, which provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

(3) Based upon consideration of aggravating and mitigating factors present in an individual case, the Commission may deviate from the penalties recommended in subsection (2). The Commission may consider the following as aggravating or mitigating factors:

* * *

e) The number of times the educator has been previously disciplined by the Commission;

(f) The length of time the educator has practiced and the contribution as an educator[.]

46. Under the facts found herein, the penalty to be imposed on Respondent is mitigated by two factors set forth in rule 6B-11.007(3), including the length of time as an educator and number of times previously disciplined.

47. Respondent has been a teacher for 23 years. The evidence established that throughout his teaching career, Respondent has been a compassionate and dedicated educator, and has meaningfully contributed to the lives of his students. He also has a reputation for being protective of children in his interaction with them.

48. The evidence established that Respondent has been previously disciplined by the EPC and the discipline was for events similar to those at

⁴ The disciplinary guidelines in effect on the date of incident, April 3, 2018, were the rules which became effective April 9, 2009. The rules were amended shortly after the incident but did not become effective until May 29, 2018.

issue in this matter. However, the actions occurred prior to the discipline imposed.

49. Petitioner argues Respondent's educator's certificate should be revoked for two years from the date of the final order, and that Respondent be placed on probation for a period of two years after his revocation, to send a message of the serious nature of his actions. However, there should be recognition and consideration of the de facto suspension already served as Mr. Masters has not worked as a teacher for, approximately, one year.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is RECOMMENDED that the Education Practices Commission enter a final order finding that Respondent violated section 1012.795(1)(j) and rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1., that Respondent receive a Reprimand, and that he be placed on suspension for 30 days, followed by probation for a period of 12 months following reinstatement, with conditions of probation to be determined by the Education Practices Commission.

DONE AND ENTERED this 4th day of January, 2021, in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida.



YOLONDA Y. GREEN
Administrative Law Judge
Division of Administrative Hearings
The DeSoto Building
1230 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3060
(850) 488-9675
Fax Filing (850) 921-6847
www.doah.state.fl.us

Filed with the Clerk of the
Division of Administrative Hearings
this 4th day of January, 2021.

COPIES FURNISHED:

Lisa Forbess, Interim Executive Director
Education Practices Commission
Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 316
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(eServed)

Heidi B. Parker, Esquire
Egan, Lev, Lindstrom & Siwica, P.A.
2nd Floor
231 East Colonial Drive
Orlando, Florida 32801
(eServed)

Ron Weaver, Esquire
Post Office Box 770088
Ocala, Florida 34477-0088
(eServed)

Matthew Mears, General Counsel
Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1244
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(eServed)

Randy Kosec, Jr., Chief
Office of Professional Practices Services
Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 224-E
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(eServed)

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO SUBMIT EXCEPTIONS

All parties have the right to submit written exceptions within 15 days from the date of this Recommended Order. Any exceptions to this Recommended Order should be filed with the agency that will issue the Final Order in this case.