



Before the Education Practices Commission of the State of Florida



RICHARD CORCORAN,
Commissioner of Education,

Petitioner,

vs.

THOMAS CHRISTOPHER MASTERS,

Respondent.

EPC CASE No. 20-0265-RT
Index No. 21-062-FOF
DOAH CASE No. 20-4020PL
PPS No. 190-2647
CERTIFICATE No.743504

Final Order

This matter was heard by a Teacher Panel of the Education Practices Commission pursuant to sections 1012.795, 1012.796 and 120.57(1), Florida Statutes, on January 29, 2021, in Tallahassee, Florida, via video conference call, for consideration of the Recommended Order entered on January 4, 2021, in this case by YOLANDA Y. GREEN, Administrative Law Judge. Respondent was represented by Heidi S. Parker, Esquire and Nicholas R. Wolfmeyer, Esquire. Petitioner was represented by Bonnie Wilmot, Esquire and Ron Weaver, Esquire. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a copy of the Recommended Order. Attached as composite Exhibit B are Petitioner's Exceptions to Recommended Order and Request to Increase Penalty.

Ruling on Exceptions

1. The Petitioner's exception to the conclusion of law at paragraph 49 of the Recommended Order is rejected. The Commission determined that the Recommended Order used the "de facto suspension" served by the Respondent as a criterion in determining the recommended penalty and it did not rise to the level of an aggravating or mitigating factor as the recommended penalty is within the established disciplinary guidelines.

Findings of Fact

2. The Panel hereby adopts the findings of fact in the Recommended Order. There is competent substantial evidence to support these findings of fact.

Conclusions of Law

3. The Education Practices Commission has jurisdiction of this matter pursuant to Section 120.57(1), Florida Statutes, and Chapter 1012, Florida Statutes.

4. The Panel hereby adopts the conclusions of law in the Recommended Order.

Recommended Penalty

5. The Education Practices Commission hereby adopts the penalty in the Recommended Order with one exception. Based upon review of the complete record, and paragraphs 41 and 49 of the Recommended Order in particular, the Education Practices Commission determined that considering a period of unemployment as a "de facto suspension" period and thereby reducing the penalty accordingly is not appropriate.

Penalty

Upon a complete review of the record in this case, it is therefore **ORDERED** that:

6. Respondent is hereby issued a letter of reprimand

7. Respondent's certificate is hereby suspended for thirteen (13) months from the date of this Final Order.

8. Upon employment in any public or private position requiring a Florida educator's certificate, Respondent shall be placed on one (1) employment years of probation with the conditions that during that period, the Respondent shall:

A. Immediately notify the investigative office in the Department of Education upon employment or termination of employment in the state in any public or private position requiring a Florida educator's certificate.

B. Have Respondent's immediate supervisor submit annual performance reports to the investigative office in the Department of Education.

C. Pay to the Commission during the first 6 months of each probation year the administrative costs (\$150) of monitoring probation assessed to the educator.

D. Violate no law and shall fully comply with all district school board policies, school rules, and State Board of Education rules.

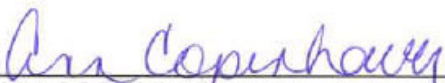
E. Satisfactorily perform all assigned duties in a competent, professional manner.

F. Bear all costs of complying with the terms of a final order entered by the Commission.

G. Provide a certified college transcript to verify successful (a grade of “pass” or a letter grade no lower than a “B”) completion of 3 hours of college level course-work in the area of Adolescent Psychology, which may be taken online, during probation.

This Final Order takes effect upon filing with the Clerk of the Education Practices Commission.

DONE AND ORDERED, this 8th day of February, 2021.


ANN COPENHAVER, Presiding Officer

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW

A PARTY WHO IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THIS FINAL ORDER IS ENTITLED TO JUDICIAL REVIEW PURSUANT TO SECTION 120.68, FLORIDA STATUTES. REVIEW PROCEEDINGS ARE GOVERNED BY THE FLORIDA RULES OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE. SUCH PROCEEDINGS ARE COMMENCED BY FILING ONE COPY OF A NOTICE OF APPEAL WITH THE EDUCATION PRACTICES COMMISSION AND A SECOND COPY, ACCOMPANIED BY FILING FEES PRESCRIBED BY LAW, WITH THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL, FIRST DISTRICT, OR WITH THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL IN THE APPELLATE DISTRICT WHERE THE PARTY RESIDES. THE NOTICE OF APPEAL MUST BE FILED WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS OF RENDITION OF THIS ORDER.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing Order was furnished to Thomas Christopher Masters, 5185 Saint Ambrose Church Road, Elkton, Florida 32033 and Heidi S. Parker, Esquire and Nicholas R. Wolfmeyer, Esquire 231 East Colonial Drive, 2nd Floor, Orlando, FL 32801 by Certified U.S. Mail, by electronic mail to Bonnie Wilmot, Deputy General Counsel, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1544, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400 and Ron Weaver, Esquire, P.O. Box 770088, Ocala, FL 34477 this 8th day of February, 2021.



Faith Lenzo, Clerk
Education Practices Commission

COPIES FURNISHED TO:

Office of Professional Practices Services

Bureau of Educator Certification

Superintendent
St. Johns County Schools
40 Orange Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084-3693

Timothy Frizzell
Assistant Attorney General

Yolonda Y. Green
Administrative Law Judge
Division of Administrative Hearings
1230 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1550

Claudia Llado, Clerk
Division of Administrative Hearings

Probation Office