



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Ny'yah Cornick and
Sherice Lott, Early Childhood
Specialist (M0633B), Newark School
District

Examination Appeals

CSC Docket Nos. 2022-1887 and
2021-1943

ISSUED: SEPTEMBER 24, 2021
(SLK)

Ny'yah Cornick and Sherice Lott appeal the determinations of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that they did not meet the experience requirements for the open competitive examination for Early Childhood Specialist (M0633B), Newark School District. These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues presented.

The subject examination's closing date was October 21, 2020. The education requirements were a Bachelor's degree. The experience requirements were one year of experience in coordinating programs in early childhood education on an administrative level. Further, two years of experience as a teacher could substitute for the above experience. Applicants who did not meet the above education requirement could substitute additional experience on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. A total of 26 individuals applied and five were found eligible. Certification OL210480 was issued containing the names of the five eligibles and its disposition was due September 1, 2021, but it has not yet been returned. The list expires on May 26, 2024.

On Cornick's application, she indicated that she possessed a Master's degree. She also indicated that she was provisionally serving in the subject title from August 2020 to the October 21, 2020 closing date, a Case Aide for Catholic Charities of Newark from March 2020 to July 2020, a part-time Seasonal Associate for Banana Republic from October 2019 to December 2019, a Teacher Assistant for

NJIT Upward Bound from June 2019 to August 2019, a Para-professional for KIPP NJ from September 2016 to June 2019, a Summer Intern for NPS Extended Day Program from June 2018 to August 2018, an Assistant Teacher for Roseland Child Development Center from June 2016 to August 2016, a Senior Sales Associate for Gap from July 2014 to June 2016 and a Sales Associate for Gap from July 2013 to July 2014. Agency Services credited Cornick with having met the education requirement and three months of experience based on her provisional service in the subject title, but determined that she lacked nine months of experience.

On Lott's application, she indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree. She also indicated that she was a Social Service Technician from September 2020 to the October 21, 2020 closing date, a Care Manager for Hudson Partnership CMO from July 2014 to December 2014, a Family at Risk Caseworker for VHS Child Abuse Prevention from January 2013 to July 2014, a Family Advocate for Leagues, Inc. from March 2012 to November 2013, and a Facilitator/Mentor for Hudson County Child Abuse Prevention from June 2011 to March 2013. Agency Services credited Lott with having met the education requirement, but determined that she lacked one year of experience.

On appeal, Cornick states that she is new to Civil Service and did not provide sufficient details regarding her early childhood education experience. She presents that she had two years of experience as a teacher as of the subject examination closing date in addition to coordinating programs in early childhood education. Cornick states that she has direct classroom experience and experience coordinating programs at an administrative level. She indicates that she worked as a Co-Teacher when she was an Assistant Teacher for Kinder Care Education and a Paraprofessional/Teacher Assistant for KIPP New Jersey. Cornick also highlights her experience as a Social Work Fellow for Advocates for Children of New Jersey, which is a State early childhood research and advocacy organization. She explains that these positions required coordination and collection of student data for the school, program directors, and families regarding student educational and individual needs, which involved coordinating and active implementation of final recommendations with program directors, teachers and families as a team. Further, her experience at Kinder Care involved work in early education where the curriculum focused on early academics, physical activity, and social and emotional learning. She describes how she worked with the lead teacher to regularly assess student progress with key developmental milestones so that instruction to support individual student's needs could be tailored. Cornick presents that with KIPP New Jersey, she provided and supported instruction to students between kindergarten and eighth grade where the curriculum focused on addressing achievement gaps using the Common Core and implementing social and emotional learning opportunities throughout the day.

Cornick emphasizes that throughout her career, she had the responsibility of collecting, analyzing, interviewing, and sharing data with program leads that led to

the implementation of various program initiatives that addressed the needs of children and families. For example, she states that she was directly responsible for tracking student behavior and its impact on reading milestones, which involved conducting direct student observations of interactions with teachers and peers on a daily basis that led to the creation and implementation of a student tracking tool which captured daily behaviors, assessment scores, and interactions between peers and teacher, which was followed by an analysis of the data and the implementation of reward systems that positively impacted student behavior and academic outcomes. Cornick also presents that she was responsible for tracking early childhood education programs throughout the State and updating the childcare mapping system used by the State which involved researching, contacting, and visiting childcare sites to gain input on program options and identify areas considered childcare deserts, which led to research and advocacy that resulted in additional legislative support for Statewide childcare initiatives.

Lott states that as a Social Service Technician, which was formerly known as Family Advocate, she has five years of experience coordinating programs and citywide events to support programs and to monitor and update the family service portion of the Head Start program based on its performance standards. Additionally, she observed the safety and interaction of staff and students in the classroom to ensure that they complied with Head Start Performance Standards. Further, Lott explains that after observations, she conducts a professional and developmental meeting with staff to identify and discuss areas of improvement needed in the classroom and programs and she facilitates discussion about the needs of the program and offers solutions. She also indicates that she is responsible for tracking data from various programs such as the Head Start Program, the Food and Security Program and Read Across America and maintains resources that can be used to assist the programs by speaking to community partners to request them to donate to the program and by speaking at professional development and family engagement workshops. Moreover, Lott emphasizes that she provides the Head Start Program with ongoing resources to obtain better mental health and family stability. She also sets goals with families around education, social and emotional development and personal objectives. She presents that she works with the Health Coordinator and School Nurse to implement health and nutrition workshops and events and she lists the community partner organizations that she brings to attend workshops and events. Finally, Lott explains that her daily responsibilities include keeping electronic and hard copy records using the Office of Early Childhood data system, which enables her to provide monthly reports that identify the statistical data of the program's enrollment, parent engagement, recruitment, case management, special projects and events, community resources shared, staff professional development, workshops, health, social services concerns and goals and objectives relevant to the program.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-6.3(b) provides, in pertinent part, that the appellant shall have the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In this matter, a review of Cornick's and Lott's applications and appeals indicate that Agency Services correctly determined that they were not eligible for the subject examination. Regarding Cornick, Agency Services credited her with having met the education requirement and three months of experience based on her provisional service in the subject title by the October 21, 2020 closing date, but determined that she lacked nine months of experience. In reviewing her experience as a Teacher Assistant/Paraprofessional Teacher, this experience is not applicable, as being an assistant teacher is not the same as having the main responsibility for managing a classroom that a Teacher has. Further, it is noted that her experience as a Social Work Fellow was a 25-hour per week internship that was part of her curriculum for her Master's degree program in Social Work. Therefore, this experience is not coordinating programs in early childhood education on an administrative level as required.¹ Additionally, a review of her resume confirms that she was not working on an administrative level in this position as she was assisting a Policy Analyst with research and there is no evidence that she administered the coordination of early childhood programs.

Concerning Lott, Agency Services credited her with having met the education requirement, but she lacked one year of experience. A review of her application indicates that while she may have some responsibility in coordinating early childhood education programs as a Social Service Technician, this is a paraprofessional position where she provided support for these programs, and there is no evidence that she worked on an administrative level. For example, some of her duties involved tracking data from programs, working with families, and daily record keeping using the data system. In order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its primary focus full-time responsibilities in the areas required in the announcement. *See In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). Additionally, the appellant did not present any teaching experience and her other experience primarily involved working with individuals and families

¹ Although Cornick's position was an internship that was part of a curriculum, as the subject examination only required a Bachelor's degree, and this experience was part of a Master's degree program, it theoretically could have been applicable experience. Cornick's application indicated that her internship was from August 2019 to April 2020, which is nine months. However, it was only for 25 hours per week, which is 71 percent of a full-time 35 hour per week. Therefore, after pro-rating this experience, even if she were to get credit for it, this experience was only the equivalent of seven full-time months, and she would still lack two months of experience.

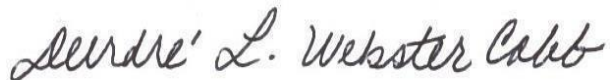
performing case management and not in the coordination of early childhood education programs at an administrative level.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 22 DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2021



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