

IN THE MATTER OF THE TENURE :
HEARING OF PRISCILLA M. DAWSON, : COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF : DECISION
TRENTON, MERCER COUNTY. :
_____:

SYNOPSIS

On October 26, 2007, the petitioning Board certified 28 tenure charges of unbecoming conduct against respondent Priscilla Dawson, the former principal of Trenton Central High School, alleging that respondent demonstrated “direct action, inaction, lack of concern, no visible leadership and lack of oversight” toward the ninth grade repeater program at the Sherman Avenue Campus for the 2004-2005 school year. The Board sought dismissal of respondent from her tenured employment.

The ALJ found, *inter alia*, that: the Board failed to carry its burden of proving any of the tenure charges brought against respondent; Dr. Dawson was not involved in the decision to reconstitute the ninth grade repeater program at the Sherman Avenue Campus; under respondent’s tenure as principal at Trenton Central High School, the drop-out rate was reduced dramatically, test scores rose, and the graduation rate increased significantly. The ALJ determined that the Board’s decision to file tenure charges against Dr. Dawson without adequate proofs and, where pertinent, with proofs to the contrary, was imprudent, and found respondent not guilty on all charges. The ALJ ordered that Dr. Dawson be reinstated with full back pay.

Upon a careful and independent review of the record, the Commissioner concurred with the thorough and well-considered Initial Decision of the ALJ. Accordingly, the charges were dismissed and the respondent reinstated with full back pay and benefits.

This synopsis is not part of the Commissioner’s decision. It has been prepared for the convenience of the reader. It has been neither reviewed nor approved by the Commissioner.

December 4, 2009

OAL DKT. NO. EDU 10447-07
AGENCY DKT. NO. 369-12/07

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The thorough and well-considered Initial Decision by Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Ana C. Viscomi of the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) has been carefully reviewed. Neither party has excepted to same. The Commissioner finds nothing in the record to contradict ALJ Viscomi's detailed findings of fact, and her legal conclusion that the 28 tenure charges filed by petitioner against respondent are unsupported and were imprudently brought.

Accordingly, the charges are dismissed and respondent is hereby reinstated with full back pay and benefits.

IT IS SO ORDERED.*

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Date of Decision: December 4, 2009

Date of Mailing: December 4, 2009

* This decision may be appealed to the Superior Court, Appellate Division, pursuant to *P.L. 2008, c. 36*.

