

New Jersey Commissioner of Education

Final Decision

In the Matter of the Suspension of the
Teaching Certificates of Francesca Coté,
Board of Education of the Township of
South Brunswick, Middlesex County.

Synopsis

This matter was opened before the Commissioner of Education on January 18, 2024, by way of an Order to Show Cause served by the petitioner, Board of Education of the Township of South Brunswick, upon respondent Francesca Coté, requiring her to show cause why an order should not be entered suspending her teaching certificate pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:26-10* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:28-8* for resigning without giving the notice required by law. In response to the Order to Show Cause, respondent emailed the Office of Controversies and Disputes to provide mitigating factors that she wished the Commissioner to consider in making his decision, namely that it was mandatory for her to resign in the time and manner she did due to the impact her employment was having on her mental health. However, respondent indicated that she did not wish to engage in the administrative dispute resolution process.

Upon review, the Commissioner concluded that the allegations, which respondent has chosen not to deny, may be deemed admitted and justify suspension of respondent's certificates. Accordingly, summary decision was granted to the Board, and respondent's certificates were suspended for a period of one year from the date of the filing of this decision – a copy of which was forwarded to the State Board of Examiners for the purpose of effectuating this order.

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.

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In response to the Order to Show Cause, respondent emailed the Office of Controversies and Disputes to provide mitigating factors that she wished the Commissioner to consider in making his decision, namely that it was mandatory for her to resign in the time and manner she did due to the impact her employment was having on her mental health. However, respondent indicated that she did not wish to engage in the administrative dispute resolution process.

The petition and supporting exhibits submitted by petitioner in this matter indicate that: respondent entered into a contract to work as a teacher for the 2023-2024 school year; the contract provides that it can be terminated by the employee upon sixty days' written notice; and on October 16, 2023, respondent sent correspondence to petitioner indicating that she was resigning, effective October 20, 2023, thereby providing less than the required sixty days' notice. The respondent has not denied these allegations; therefore, the Commissioner deems such

allegations to be admitted pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.5(a)* and further deems them sufficient to justify suspension of respondent's teaching certificates pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:26-10* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:28-8*.

Accordingly, summary decision is hereby granted to petitioner. Respondent's teaching certificates, along with any substitute teaching credentials she may hold, are suspended for a period of one year from the filing date of this decision, a copy of which shall be forwarded to the State Board of Examiners for implementation of the suspension.

IT IS SO ORDERED.¹



ACTING COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Date of Decision: March 26, 2024

Date of Mailing: March 27, 2024

¹ This decision may be appealed to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-9.1*. Under *N.J.Ct.R. 2:4-1(b)*, a notice of appeal must be filed with the Appellate Division within 45 days from the date of mailing of this decision.