



## Before the Education Practices Commission of the State of Florida



*IN RE* The Denial of the Application  
for Teacher's Certificate of:

STEFFANIE RAE NELSON

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EPC CASE N° 18-0307-D  
INDEX N°: 19-016-FOI  
PPS N° 178-0849-LA

### Final Order

Steffanie Rae Nelson holds Florida educator's certificate no. 1346669. The Commissioner has filed a Notice of Reasons to deny the Applicant authorization for an educator's certificate. A copy of the Notice of Reasons (NOR) is attached to and made a part of this Order.

This cause came before a teacher panel of the Education Practices on December 13, 2018 in Tallahassee, Florida. The Applicant was present.

The Applicant has chosen not to dispute the allegations of the NOR and has requested an informal hearing to present evidence and testimony in mitigation.

Paragraphs 1 through 2 of the NOR were adopted by the Education Practices Commission as its findings of fact. Counts 1 through 2 of the NOR were adopted by the Education Practices Commission as its conclusions of law.

Upon consideration, it is ORDERED that:

1. Applicant be permitted to pursue application for a Florida educator's certificate. If found qualified, the certificate shall be issued.

2. Applicant is issued a letter of reprimand.

3. Applicant is assessed an administrative fine of \$500.00 to be paid within the first two (2) years of the Final Order.

4. Upon employment in any public or private position requiring a Florida educator's certificate, Applicant shall be placed on 1 employment year of probation with the conditions that during that period, (s)he 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 Applicant'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. Be prohibited from handling school funds.

DONE AND ORDERED, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2019.

  
NICHOLAS PIETKIEWICZ, Presiding Officer

COPIES FURNISHED TO:

Office of Professional Practices  
Services

Bureau of Educator Certification

Superintendent  
Duval County Schools  
1701 Prudential Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207-8182

Professional Standards  
Duval County Schools  
1701 Prudential Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207-8182

Lawrence Harris  
Assistant Attorney General

Claudia Llado, Clerk  
Division of Administrative Hearings

Probation

**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 mailed to Steffanie Rae Nelson, [REDACTED], Jacksonville, FL 32244 by Certified U.S. Mail and by electronic mail to Bonnie Wilmont, Deputy General Counsel, Suite 1232, Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400 this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2019.



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Lisa Forbess, Clerk  
Education Practices Commission

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**IN RE: The Denial of the  
Application for Teacher's  
Certificate of:**

**CASE NO. 178-0849-LA**

**STEFFANIE RAE NELSON.**

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**NOTICE OF REASONS**

STEFFANIE RAE NELSON, [REDACTED] Bossier City, Louisiana 71112, Department of Education Number 1346669, having filed her application for a Florida Educator's Certificate before the Department of Education;

The Department of Education having reviewed the application in accordance with sections 1012.315, 1012.56, 1012.795 and 1012.796, Florida Statutes, has determined that STEFFANIE RAE NELSON is not entitled to the issuance of a Florida Educator's Certificate, accordingly; and

The Department of Education files and serves upon the Applicant, STEFFANIE RAE NELSON, its Notice of Reasons for its denial in accordance with the provisions of section 120.60, Florida Statutes.

The Department of Education alleges:

1. On or about September 24, 2013, Applicant pled guilty to and was adjudicated guilty of Theft of Goods.
2. On or about February 19, 2014, Applicant pled guilty to and was adjudicated guilty of Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

The Department of Education charges:

**STATUTE VIOLATIONS**


**COUNT 1:** The Applicant is in violation of section 1012.56(12)(a), Florida Statutes, which provides that the Department of Education may deny an Applicant a certificate if the

department possesses evidence satisfactory to it that the Applicant has committed an act or acts, or that a situation exists for which the Education Practices Commission would be authorized to revoke a teaching certificate.

**COUNT 2:** The Applicant is in violation of section 1012.795(1)(f), Florida Statutes, in that the Applicant has been convicted or found guilty of, or entered a plea of guilty to, regardless of adjudication of guilt, a misdemeanor, felony, or any other criminal charge, other than a minor traffic violation.

**WHEREFORE,** the undersigned concludes that the Applicant has committed an act or acts, or that a situation exists, which would authorize the Education Practices Commission to revoke or impose other sanctions against an educator's certificate. Based on the reasons set forth herein and in accordance with the Explanation of Rights and Election of Rights forms attached to and made a part of this Notice of Reasons, the undersigned respectfully recommends that the Education Practices Commission impose an appropriate sanction against the Applicant's application or educator's certificate pursuant to the authority provided in sections 1012.56(11), 1012.795(1) and 1012.796(7), Florida Statutes. The sanctions imposed by the Education Practices Commission may include, but are not limited to, any one or a combination of the following: affirming the Department of Education's denial of the issuance of an educator's certificate to the Applicant for any period of time or permanently; issuing the Applicant a written reprimand; placing the Applicant on probation for any period of time; restricting the Applicant's authorized scope of practice; assessing the Applicant an administrative fine; directing the Applicant to enroll in the Recovery Network Program; suspending the Applicant's educator's certificate for a period of time not to exceed five years; revoking the Applicant's educator's certificate for a period of time up to 10 years or permanently; determining the Applicant to be ineligible for certification; or barring the Applicant from reapplying for an educator's certificate for a period of time up to 10 years or permanently.

EXECUTED on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2018.

  
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PAM STEWART, as  
Commissioner of Education  
State of Florida



**EDUCATION PRACTICES COMMISSION**  
**STATE OF FLORIDA**

**GRETCHEN KELLEY BRANTLEY**

Executive Director

**LAWRENCE HARRIS**

Legal Counsel

**LISA FORBESS**

Clerk of Court

**CHRISTIE GOLD**

Chairperson

**NICHOLAS PIETKIEWICZ**

Co-Chairperson

January 8, 2019

Steffanie Nelson

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Jacksonville, Florida 32244

Re: Pam Stewart vs. Steffanie Nelson

EPC No.: 18-0307-D; DOE No.: 1346669

Dear Ms. Nelson:

As you know, the teacher panel of the Education Practices Commission reviewed the matter pending against you. The panel concluded that you violated the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession prescribed by the State Board of Education rules and hereby reprimands you for the conduct alleged in the Notice of Reasons which is incorporated herein.

This panel, which includes fellow educators, believes that, as a future teacher, you are required to exercise a measure of leadership beyond reproach. By your actions, you have lessened the reputation of all who practice our profession and have diminished your position as an educational leader. The profession cannot condone your actions, nor can the public who employ us.

The Education Practices Commission sincerely hopes it is your intention never to violate any professional obligation in fulfilling your responsibilities as an educator. To violate the standards of the profession will surely result in further action.

This letter of reprimand is being placed in your state certification file, and a copy is being sent to the Duval County School Board for placement in your personnel file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Pietkiewicz".

Nicholas Pietkiewicz  
Presiding Officer