



Before the Education Practices Commission of the State of Florida



RICHARD CORCORAN as the
Commissioner of Education,

Petitioner,

vs.

CATHERINE JANINE SEKORA,

Respondent.

EPC CASE No.: 20-0162-RT
Index No. 20-291-AS
PPS No. 189-2031

Final Order

Respondent, Catherine Janine Sekora, holds Florida educator's Certificate No. 698655. Petitioner has filed an Administrative Complaint seeking suspension, revocation, permanent revocation or other disciplinary action against the certificate.

Petitioner and Respondent have entered into a Settlement Agreement for resolution of this cause. The Settlement Agreement and the Administrative Complaint are attached to and made a part of this Final Order.

A Teacher Hearing Panel of the Education Practices Commission met on September 3, 2020, via telephonic hearing in Tallahassee, Florida. The Commission

accepts the Settlement Agreement as the appropriate resolution of this cause.

It is therefore ORDERED that the Settlement Agreement is hereby ACCEPTED and Respondent shall comply with its terms and conditions.

This Order becomes effective upon filing.

DONE AND ORDERED, this 3rd day of September, 2020.


NICHOLAS PIETKIEWICZ, Presiding Officer

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

Claudia Llado, Clerk
Division of Administrative Hearings

Recovery Network Program

Probation

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW
UNLESS WAIVED, 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: Catherine Janine Sekora, [REDACTED], St. Augustine, FL 32080 and Mark S. Levine, Esq., Levine & Stivers, 245 East Virginia Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 by Certified U.S. Mail and by electronic mail to Bonnie Wilmot, Deputy General Counsel, Suite 1544, Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400 this 8th day of September, 2020.



Lisa Forbess, Clerk
Education Practices Commission

**STATE OF FLORIDA
EDUCATION PRACTICES COMMISSION**

**RICHARD CORCORAN, as
Commissioner of Education,**

Petitioner,

vs.

CASE NO. 189-2031

CATHERINE JANINE SEKORA,

Respondent.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT

Petitioner, Richard Corcoran, as Commissioner of Education, files this Administrative Complaint against CATHERINE JANINE SEKORA. The Petitioner seeks the appropriate disciplinary sanction of the Respondent's educator's certificate pursuant to sections 1012.315, 1012.795, and 1012.796, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code, Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida, said sanctions specifically set forth in sections 1012.795(1) and 1012.796(7), Florida Statutes.

The Petitioner alleges:

JURISDICTION

1. The Respondent holds Florida Educator's Certificate 698655, covering the area of Mathematics, which is valid through June 30, 2023.
2. At all times pertinent hereto, the Respondent was employed as a Mathematics Teacher at Murray Middle School in the St. Johns County School District.

MATERIAL ALLEGATIONS

3. On or about December 18, 2018, Respondent lost control, while escorting students, when she became upset and yelled profanities which include but may not be limited to:
 - a. Fuck this place;
 - b. Fuck these kids;
 - c. I'm tired of their shit; and
 - d. Go to the fucking Dean.

As a result, students in multiple classrooms were unable to focus on their midterms, and required extra time to finish.

The Petitioner charges:

STATUTE VIOLATIONS


COUNT 1: The Respondent is in violation of section 1012.795(1)(j), Florida Statutes, in that Respondent has violated the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession prescribed by State Board of Education rules.

RULE VIOLATIONS

COUNT 2: The allegations of misconduct set forth herein are in violation of Rule 6A-10.081(2)(a)1, Florida Administrative Code, in that Respondent has failed to make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental health and/or physical health and/or safety.

WHEREFORE, 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 Administrative Complaint, Petitioner respectfully recommends that the Education Practices Commission impose an appropriate sanction against the Respondent's educator's certificate pursuant to the authority provided in sections 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: issuing the Respondent a written reprimand; placing the Respondent on probation for any period of time; restricting the Respondent's authorized scope of practice; assessing the Respondent an administrative fine; directing the Respondent to enroll in the Recovery Network Program; suspending the Respondent's educator's certificate for a period of time not to exceed five years; revoking the Respondent's educator's certificate for a period of time up to 10 years or permanently; determining the Respondent to be ineligible for certification; or barring the Respondent from reapplying for an educator's certificate for a period of time up to 10 years or permanently.

EXECUTED on this 9th day of April, 2020.


RICHARD CORCORAN, as
Commissioner of Education
State of Florida

**STATE OF FLORIDA
EDUCATION PRACTICES COMMISSION**

**RICHARD CORCORAN, as
Commissioner of Education**

Petitioner,

vs.

CASE NO. 189-2031

CATHERINE JANINE SEKORA,

Respondent.

_____ /

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Petitioner and Respondent hereby stipulate and agree as follows:

1. **Certification.** Respondent holds Florida Educator's Certificate Number 698655 issued by the Department of Education covering the area of Mathematics, which is valid through June 30, 2023.
2. **Employment.** At all times pertinent hereto, Respondent was employed as a Mathematics Teacher at Murray Middle School in the St. Johns County School District.
3. **Allegations.** Respondent neither admits nor denies, but elects not to contest the allegations set forth in Petitioner's Administrative Complaint, which are incorporated herein by reference.
4. **Letter of Reprimand.** Respondent agrees to accept a letter of reprimand, a copy of which shall be placed in her certification file with the Department of Education and a copy of which shall be placed in her personnel file with the employing school district.
5. **Recovery Network Program.**
 - a. **Evaluation.** Respondent agrees to:
 - 1) submit to an evaluation relating to the issues cited in the Administrative Complaint as determined by the Recovery Network Program (RNP) and conducted by a Florida licensed psychologist, psychiatrist or mental health counselor approved by the RNP;
 - 2) provide the RNP written verification from the treatment

provider(s) of successful completion of the evaluation within sixty (60) days of issuance of the Final Order accepting this Settlement Agreement **OR** within sixty (60) days of the initial date of employment in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate, whichever occurs later, and authorize the RNP to release evidence of satisfaction of this requirement directly to any employing school district or private or charter school;

3) undergo any counseling or treatment as may be prescribed by said professional; and

4) provide the RNP and the employing school district or private or charter school with written verification from the treatment provider(s), of completion of all recommended treatments within sixty (60) days of completion.

b. **Prior Evaluation.** If Respondent has undergone evaluation(s) and treatment and/or counseling after the incident(s) alleged in the Administrative Complaint, the evaluation(s) and treatment and/or counseling may be used in lieu of the evaluation(s) and treatment and/or counseling agreed to herein, if acceptable to the RNP.

c. **Employment.** If Respondent is not employed in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate on the date, or within one (1) year of the date, the initial RNP evaluation(s) required herein are performed, Respondent agrees to submit to follow-up evaluation(s) as determined by the RNP within sixty (60) days of being employed in such a position.

d. **Costs.** Respondent shall bear responsibility for all costs associated with the evaluation, treatment and counseling.

6. **Probation.** Respondent agrees that she shall be placed on probation for a period of one (1) employment year. If Respondent is currently employed in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate, probation shall begin upon the issuance of the Final Order by the Education Practices Commission (EPC) provided the EPC has accepted this Settlement Agreement. If Respondent is not currently employed in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate, probation shall begin upon her re-employment in such a position. In the event Respondent's employment is interrupted for any reason prior to the expiration of probation, the probation shall be tolled until Respondent resumes employment in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate. If applicable, this probationary period shall commence upon completion of any previous and currently incomplete probationary period imposed by a Final Order issued by the Education Practices Commission. As conditions of probation, Respondent:

a. shall immediately contact the Department of Education upon employment in Florida in a position requiring a Florida educator's certificate or upon termination from such a position. If currently employed in such a position, Respondent shall contact the Department of

Education within ten (10) days of the issuance of the Final Order accepting this Settlement Agreement and Respondent shall provide the Department of Education with the name and address of her work site as well as the name, address and telephone number of her immediate supervisor;

b. shall make arrangements for her immediate supervisor to provide the EPC with a true and accurate copy of each written annual performance evaluation or assessment prepared by her supervisor within ten (10) days of its preparation;

c. shall pay to the EPC \$150.00 within the first six (6) months of each probation year to defray the costs of monitoring probation;

d. shall, within the probationary period, take a 3-credit hour college level course in the area of Classroom Management. The class may be taken in person, or from an accredited on-line source, and Respondent shall submit an official college transcript verifying successful completion of same with a grade of "B" or higher to the Department of Education;

e. shall violate no law and fully comply with all district school board regulations, school rules, and State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.081; and

f. shall satisfactorily perform her duties in a competent, professional manner.

7. **Fine.** Respondent agrees to pay a fine in the amount of \$750.00 to the EPC within the probationary period.

8. **Violation.** In the event Respondent fails to comply with each condition set forth herein, she agrees that the Petitioner shall be authorized to file an Administrative Complaint or a Notice of Violation with the EPC seeking sanctions against her Florida educator's certificate up to and including permanent revocation of her Florida educator's certificate and a permanent bar from re-application for a Florida educator's certificate, based upon the violation of the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

9. **Costs and Fees.** Respondent agrees that any costs associated with the fulfillment of the terms of this Settlement Agreement shall be her sole responsibility. These costs include, but are not limited to, those associated with the Recovery Network Program (RNP) and Probation, if applicable. The probation monitoring fee shall be held in abeyance if Respondent is not employed as an educator pursuant to the terms of the Probation.

10. **Force and Effect.** This Settlement Agreement constitutes an offer of settlement of disputed issues of material fact until accepted and executed by all parties. The Settlement Agreement has no force or effect unless executed by all parties. Upon execution by the parties, this Settlement Agreement is a binding contract and neither party may withdraw prior to

consideration of this Settlement Agreement by the EPC. Approval of this Settlement Agreement by the EPC is a condition subsequent. If the executed Settlement Agreement is rejected by the EPC, it becomes void. If the Settlement Agreement is not accepted and executed by all parties, the terms herein shall be inadmissible in any subsequent formal or informal administrative hearing or in any other legal action between the parties.

11. **Notice of “Three Strikes” Provision.** Respondent is hereby put on notice that Section 1012.795(6)(b), Florida Statutes, provides for permanent revocation of an educator’s certificate under certain circumstances when the educator’s certificate has been sanctioned by the Education Practices Commission on two (2) previous occasions.

12. **Waiver of Rights.** Respondent understands provisions of this Settlement Agreement, their legal effect, and her rights under Florida law to a formal hearing before a duly designated administrative law judge of the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) or an informal hearing before the EPC. Respondent specifically waives her right to both a formal and an informal hearing, except she may appear before the EPC in order to urge the adoption of this Settlement Agreement. Respondent further acknowledges that she is under no duress, coercion or undue influence to execute this Settlement Agreement and that she has had the opportunity to receive the advice of legal counsel prior to signing this Settlement Agreement.

13. **Approval.** The parties intend to be bound by this Agreement. When fully executed, this Settlement Agreement is a binding contract and shall be submitted to the EPC with the joint request by the parties that the EPC accept and adopt the terms of this Settlement Agreement as the basis for its Final Order in this proceeding. The parties understand that the EPC has the discretion to reject this Settlement Agreement and order a full evidentiary hearing on the allegations of the Administrative Complaint if, in the exercise of its discretion, it deems such action to be appropriate.

14. **Notice.** Respondent waives all statutory and regulatory provisions concerning notice of hearing and agrees that this Settlement Agreement may be presented to the EPC for consideration at its next available scheduled meeting, provided that Respondent is given reasonable advanced notice of time, place and date of said meeting.

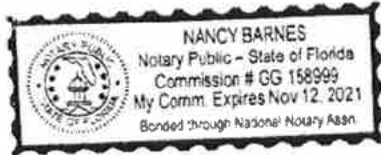
(SIGNATURES AND NOTARIZATION ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Settlement Agreement on this 30th day of April, 2020.

Catherine Janine Sekora
CATHERINE JANINE SEKORA

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF Volusia

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 30th day of April, 2020, by Catherine Janine Sekora, who is to personally known or produced as identification [type of identification produced].



Nancy Barnes
NOTARY PUBLIC
My commission expires:

/s/ Anastasios Kamoutsas
ANASTASIOS KAMOUTSAS
Assistant General Counsel
Suite 1544, Turlington Building
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
Telephone (850) 245-0443
Facsimile (850) 245-9425

ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER

MARK S. LEVINE, ESQUIRE
Levine & Stivers
245 East Virginia Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone (850) 222-6580
Facsimile (850) 224-6270

ATTORNEY FOR RESPONDENT



EDUCATION PRACTICES COMMISSION
STATE OF FLORIDA

LISA FORBESS
Interim Executive Director
TIMOTHY FRIZZELL
Legal Counsel

NICHOLAS PIETKIEWICZ
Chairperson
ANA ARMBRISTER BLAND, Ph.D.
Co-Chairperson

September 3, 2020

Catherine Sekora

[REDACTED]
St. Augustine, Florida 32080

Re: Richard Corcoran vs. Catherine Sekora
EPC No.: 20-0162-RT; DOE No.: 698655

Dear Ms. Sekora:

As you know, a hearing panel of the Florida Education Practices Commission reviewed the matter pending against you in its entirety. Based upon the panel's full consideration and upon the panel's acceptance of your Settlement Agreement at a public hearing, you are hereby reprimanded.

The Commission, composed of teachers, administrators, parents, law enforcement officials, former school board members and former superintendents, believes that educators must exercise a measure of leadership beyond reproach. The Commission cannot condone any act that bears negatively on the profession's integrity, nor can the public who employ us.

This letter of reprimand is being placed in your state certification file, and a copy is being sent to the St. Johns 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