

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
Petitioner,**

v.

**KRISTEN A. SAURO,
Respondent.**

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PSPC DOCKET NO. DI-20-084

ORDER APPROVING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

This matter is before the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (“Commission”) on the Department of Education’s (“Department”) Motion for Entry of Order filed on November 20, 2020. The Motion requests that the Commission issue an order approving the parties’ Settlement Agreement and directing the Department to suspend the certificate and employment eligibility of Kristen A. Sauro (“Respondent”) in settlement of a Notice of Charges filed against her.

BACKGROUND

Respondent holds an Instructional II certificate in the areas of Ment. and/or Phys. Handicapped K-12 and Elementary K-6. At all relevant times, Respondent was employed by the Sto-Rox School District as an elementary school teacher. On September 25, 2020, the Department filed a Notice of Charges alleging that Respondent drove under the influence of alcohol and was under the influence while at work.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

A teaching certificate is a constitutionally protected property right entitled to due process protection. Bowalick v. Dep’t of Educ., 840 A.2d 519, 522 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2003).

Generally, an accused educator is entitled to a full evidentiary hearing conducted in accordance with the Act and the Administrative Agency Law. 24 P.S. §§ 2070.13 (relating to hearing) and 2070.18(a) (relating to commission proceedings and procedures). In place of a hearing, a charge of misconduct can be resolved in a written settlement agreement. 24 P.S. § 2070.12 (relating to department action after investigation). When approved by the Commission, a settlement agreement has the same effect as an order issued following an administrative adjudication. See Kenney v. Bureau of Prof'l & Occupational Affairs, 203 A.2d 421 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2019).

The parties have entered into a written Settlement Agreement, whereby they agree to resolve all matters contained in the Notice of Charges with the suspension of Respondent's certificate and employment eligibility. At its regularly scheduled meeting on November 23, 2020, the Commission heard comments on the proposed Settlement Agreement from counsel representing Respondent and the Department. After careful consideration, the Commission finds that the agreement is fair, reasonable, and in the best interests of the parties and the public and enters the following:

ORDER

AND NOW, this 23rd day of December 2020, upon consideration of the Motion for Entry of Order filed by the Department of Education requesting approval of the parties' Settlement Agreement in lieu of further disciplinary proceedings, it is hereby Ordered:

1. The Motion for Entry of Order is Granted, and the Settlement Agreement is approved.

2. The Commission incorporates the terms of the Settlement Agreement into this Order.
3. Consistent with the terms of the Settlement Agreement, the Department is directed to suspend Respondent's certificate and eligibility to be employed as a charter or cyber charter school staff member or contracted educational provider staff member effective on the date of this Order.
4. To have the suspension lifted, Respondent must apply to the Commission for an order lifting the suspension pursuant to 24 P.S. § 2070.16.
5. Respondent is not eligible to be employed in a school entity in a position requiring certification or as a charter or cyber charter school staff member or contracted educational provider staff member, or eligible for any certificate until her certificate and employment eligibility are reinstated in accordance with the Act.
6. The Notice of Charges filed against Respondent is resolved.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND
PRACTICES COMMISSION

By:



Myron Yoder
Chairperson Pro Tempore



Attest:

Shane F. Crosby
Executive Director

Date Mailed: December 23, 2020