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## SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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*Chris Reykdal* Old Capitol Building · PO BOX 47200 · Olympia, WA 98504-7200 · <http://www.k12.wa.us>

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RE: Debra Stebbins  
OSPI Case Number: D17-05-044  
Document: Suspension

Regarding your request for information about the above-named educator; attached is a true and correct copy of the document on file with the State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Professional Practices. These records are considered certified by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Certain information may have been redacted pursuant to Washington state laws. While those laws require that most records be disclosed on request, they also state that certain information should not be disclosed.

The following information has been withheld: **None**

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information that was redacted, if any, please contact:

OSPI Public Records Office  
P.O. Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504-7200  
Phone: (360) 725-6372  
Email: [PublicRecordsRequest@k12.wa.us](mailto:PublicRecordsRequest@k12.wa.us)

You may appeal the decision to withhold or redact any information by writing to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, OSPI P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200.



# SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

CHRIS REYKDAL Old Capitol Building · PO BOX 47200 · Olympia, WA 98504-7200 · <http://www.k12.wa.us>

IN THE MATTER OF THE EDUCATION	)	
CERTIFICATE OF	)	OPP No. D17-05-044
	)	
DEBRA STEBBINS	)	AGREED ORDER
Certificate No. 519017H	)	OF SUSPENSION
_____	)	

After receiving and investigating a notification from Shelton School District (“School District”) regarding the above referenced educator, and based upon the facts available as of the date of this Agreed Order, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, through his undersigned designee, does hereby stipulate, by and between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Office of Professional Practices and DEBRA STEBBINS (“Educator”), that (the Educator) engaged in acts of unprofessional conduct to include WAC 181-87-050(2) and WAC 181-87-060(1) and that the Educator’s Washington Education Certificate No. 519017H shall be SUSPENDED for not less than one (1) month with conditions enumerated below, based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

## I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On June 9, 2015, the Educator was issued Substitute Teacher Certificate, No. 519017H. The Substitute Teacher Certificate does not have an expiration date. On March 30, 2016, the Educator was issued Residency Teacher Certificate, No. 519017H. The Residency Teacher Certificate has an expiration date of June 30, 2019.

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DEBRA STEBBINS  
 AGREED ORDER OF SUSPENSION

2. On May 10, 2017, the Office of Professional Practices (“OPP”) within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”) received a complaint from Dr. Alex P. Apostle, the Superintendent of the School District, alleging that the Educator has committed an act of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-87-060 for disregard of generally recognized professional standards in the course of treatment of students, as well as WAC 181-87-050, by misrepresenting and omitting a material fact in an application for employment to the Shelton School District.

3. Prior to moving to Washington State, the Educator was a teacher in Washoe County School District in Nevada.

4. During the 2013–2014 school year, the Educator was employed as a Special Education teacher at Marvin Picollo Elementary School in the Washoe County School District.

5. During the interview with an OPP investigator, the Educator stated that, in or around March or April 2014, Washoe County School District placed the Educator on paid administrative leave to allow the school district to investigate allegations of abuse that were made against the Educator.

6. During the interview with an OPP investigator, the Educator stated the investigation concluded with the Educator and Washoe County School District entering into a Settlement Agreement. As part of the agreement, the Washoe County School District agreed not to disclose any information regarding the Educator’s employment without the Educator’s permission.

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7. On March 18, 2015, the Educator submitted a Character and Fitness Supplement as part of her application to receive her teaching certificate to OSPI. The Educator failed to disclose her previous administrative leave and subsequent settlement agreement with Washoe County School District. The Educator answered, “No” to the following questions:

a. Have you ever resigned from or otherwise left any employment (e.g. settlement agreement) while allegations of misconduct were pending?

b. Are you currently or have you ever been the subject of any investigation or inquiry by an employer because of allegations of misconduct?

8. On or about March 31, 2015, the Educator submitted application materials to the School District in an effort to obtain a teaching position. The Educator listed on her application that the reason for leaving her previous teaching position in the Washoe County School District was so she could retire and relocate to Washington. The Educator did not disclose that she had been placed on administrative leave during an investigation into allegations of abuse.

9. The Educator was offered and accepted a teaching position with the School District for the 2015–2016 and then again for the 2016–2017 school years as a Special Education Teacher at Shelton High School.

10. In or around November 2015, a civil complaint was filed in the United States District Court in the District of Nevada in Reno, Case # 3:15-cv-00557-LRH-WGC, against the Educator and the Washoe County School District, alleging the Educator committed acts of abuse against two students with special needs.

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11. On October 4, 2016, two orders were filed in Case # 3:15-cv-00557-LRH-WGC, approving settlements that were entered into between the parties in the above referenced case number. The parties agreed to settle the claim for a total of \$1,350,000.00, to be distributed to the parties according to the order.

12. On October 21, 2016, a Stipulation and Order for Dismissal with Prejudice was entered in Case # 3:15-cv-00557-LRH-WGC.

13. A paraeducator assigned to the special education classroom with the Educator at Shelton High School witnessed the Educator use a spray bottle filled with water on a student assigned to her classroom a couple of times. The Educator used the water bottle to distract the student from engaging in inappropriate behavior.

14. On or about March 8, 2017, a student in the Educator's special education classroom in the School District became disruptive, and the Educator had to call the security guard to deescalate the student. During this incident, the Educator used the spray bottle filled with water on this student.

15. On or about March 9, 2017, Dr. Apostle sent the Educator a letter notifying her that she was being placed on administrative leave with pay, pending an investigation into allegations of unprofessional conduct toward students.

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16. On or about April 24, 2017, Dr. Apostle sent the Educator a letter notifying her that her employment contract was not going to be renewed for the 2017–2018 school year for the following reasons:

1. Utilizing practices for addressing student behaviors, such as the spraying of students with water, that are inconsistent with the District’s values and expectations for the education and treatment of students with disabilities.
2. [The Educator’s] failure to establish positive working relationships with staff in [the Educator’s] classroom and in [the Educator’s] school.
3. [The Educator’s] failure to disclose, during the hiring process, that [the Educator] had been placed on administrative leave by a former employer.

17. As of the date of this order, the Educator is not employed as a teacher in the state of Washington.

## II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Chapter 28A.410 RCW gives the Professional Educator Standards Board the authority to develop regulations determining eligibility for and certification of personnel employed in the common schools of the state of Washington. OSPI acts as the administrator of those statutes and regulations and has the authority to issue, reprimand, suspend, and revoke education certificates. RCW 28A.410.010; RCW 28A.410.090. Chapters 181-86 and 181-87 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) further implement OSPI’s authority.

2. OSPI has jurisdiction over the Educator and the subject matter of this action.

3. The Educator committed acts of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-87-050(2) when she deliberately misrepresented and/or omitted material facts on her application to obtain a teaching certificate in Washington State.

4. The Educator committed acts of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-87-060(1) when she used a spray bottle filled with water on students.

5. There is clear and convincing evidence that the Educator committed acts of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-86-170.

6. Pursuant to WAC 181-86-080, eleven factors, at a minimum, are to be considered to determine the appropriate level and range of educator discipline:

- (1) The seriousness of the act(s) and the actual or potential harm to persons or property;
- (2) The person's criminal history including the seriousness and amount of activity;
- (3) The age and maturity level of participant(s) at the time of the activity;
- (4) The proximity or remoteness of time in which the acts occurred;
- (5) Any activity that demonstrates a disregard for health, safety or welfare;
- (6) Any activity that demonstrates a behavioral problem;
- (7) Any activity that demonstrates a lack of fitness;
- (8) Any information submitted regarding discipline imposed by any governmental or private entity as a result of acts or omissions;
- (9) Any information submitted that demonstrates aggravating or mitigating circumstances;
- (10) Any information submitted to support character and fitness; and
- (11) Any other relevant information submitted.

7. Based on the foregoing facts and considering them in light of the eleven factors enumerated in WAC 181-86-080, and in light of WAC 181-86-070, WAC 181-87-050(2), and WAC 181-87-060(1), the Educator's education certificate should be suspended for unprofessional conduct.

### III. ORDER

THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Washington Education Certificate, No. 519017H of DEBRA STEBBINS is **SUSPENDED**. The Educator may not request reinstatement of her education certificate for at least one (1) month from the effective date of this ORDER.

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DEBRA STEBBINS  
AGREED ORDER OF SUSPENSION

**REINSTATEMENT** of Debra Stebbin's education certificate shall require:

- (1) In addition to any mandatory continuing education, the Educator must successfully complete an in-person ANGER MANAGEMENT course, preapproved by OSPI. The Educator will provide OSPI proof of completion of the course prior to requesting reinstatement;
- (2) The Educator must successfully complete an in-person CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT course, preapproved by OSPI. The Educator will provide proof of completion of the course prior to requesting reinstatement;
- (3) The Educator must successfully complete an in-person course on MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES, preapproved by OSPI. The Educator will provide proof of completion of the course prior to requesting reinstatement;
- (4) The Educator must submit a new application, including Character and Fitness Supplement, provided by OPP;
- (5) The Educator must complete a fingerprint-based criminal background check through both the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Washington State Patrol;
- (6) The Educator's fingerprint background check must return with no criminal convictions occurring after the date of issuance of a Final Order of Suspension, that are listed in WAC 181-86-013, RCW 28A.410.090, or any felony convictions;
- (7) The Educator shall assume all costs of complying with the requirements of this Order.


DATED this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2018.

CHRIS REYKDAL  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
State of Washington

Stipulated to and approved  
For entry:

Dierk Meierbachtol  
Chief Legal Officer

  
Debra Stebbins, Respondent

  
Mike Gawley, Attorney for Respondent  
WSBA #22110

DEBRA STEBBINS  
AGREED ORDER OF SUSPENSION