



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE EDUCATION)
CERTIFICATE OF)

OPP No. D23-08-058

STEVEN COLMUS)
Certificate No. 370184D)

FINAL ORDER
OF SUSPENSION

After receiving and investigating a complaint from Highline Public Schools (“School District”) regarding the above referenced educator, and based upon the facts available as of the date of this Proposed Order, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, through his undersigned designee, institutes this proceeding and finds, as described below, that STEVEN COLMUS (“Educator”) engaged in acts of unprofessional conduct to include Washington Administrative Code (“WAC”) 181-87-060, and does hereby SUSPEND the Educator’s Washington Education Certificate No. 370184D for not less than thirty (30) days with conditions enumerated below, based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On July 8, 1999, the Educator was issued Washington Education Certificate No. 370184D. The Educator’s certificate, a Residency Teacher – First Issue, has no expiration date.
2. During the 2022–23 school year, the Educator was employed by the School District at Beverly Park Elementary School as an Assistant Principal.
3. On August 3, 2023, the Office of Professional Practices (“OPP”) within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”) received a complaint from Ivan Duran, the Superintendent of the School District, alleging the Educator committed unprofessional conduct

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pursuant to WAC 181-87 for multiple incidents of inappropriate physical interventions with students.

4. On November 29, 2022, the Educator participated in School District training on the use of restraints with students.

5. On March 14, 2023, Student A, a kindergarten student, had been running around the perimeter of the cafeteria tables. After Student A sat, the Educator approached Student A. When Student A stood up and moved away, the Educator grabbed their arm. Student A twisted their body and arm while the Educator maintained his hold. The Educator then walked Student A back to a seated position.

6. On March 20, 2023, Student A was seated at a table in the cafeteria with the Educator standing across from them. Student A stood up, the Educator grabbed their hand or lower arm, and guided Student A around the table. The Educator began to walk Student A towards the cafeteria doors and Student A fell to their knees. The Educator took hold of Student A's other arm, lifted them up, and carried them to the door.

7. On March 28, 2023, Student B, a kindergarten student, was lying on the cafeteria floor in an area the Educator was guiding students through. The Educator took hold of one of Student B's arms and dragged them a few feet away from where they had been lying down.

8. On March 29, 2023, Student A was running around the perimeter and between cafeteria tables. The Educator went towards Student A and took hold of Student A's hand or wrist. The Educator walked Student A out of the cafeteria into an adjoining hallway. In the hallway, the Educator continued to hold Student A, including when Student A attempted to pull away. The Educator eventually walks Student A, while still holding their hand/wrist, into the cafeteria.

9. On April 17, 2023, the Educator was placed on administrative leave.

10. On April 24, 2023, the Educator met with Sean Morrow, School District Director of Human Resources. The Educator refused to cooperate during the meeting.
11. On May 11, 2023, the Educator was notified that for the 2023–24 school year, he would be transferred from an administrative position to a non-supervisory position.
12. On May 31, 2023, the Educator signed a settlement agreement with the School District. Per the agreement, the School District would remove the administrative leave letter and the 2023–24 assignment letter from the Educator’s personnel file, the Educator would participate in one investigation interview, and the Educator would resign his employment, effective June 30, 2023.
13. On April 29, 2024, the Educator participated in an interview with OPP. During the interview, among other comments and answers, the Educator claimed that his actions on March 14, 2023, March 20, 2023, and March 28, 2023, complied with the state restraint law as he was attempting to prevent imminent harm to students.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Chapter 28A.410 Revised Code of Washington (“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 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 181-87-060 for using inappropriate physical force with students.

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

5. 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.

6. Pursuant to WAC 181-86-070, a suspension is appropriate discipline when:

(1)(b) The education practitioner has committed an act of unprofessional conduct or lacks good moral character but the superintendent of public instruction has determined that a suspension as applied to the particular education practitioner will probably deter subsequent unprofessional or other conduct which evidences lack of good moral character or personal fitness by such education practitioner, and believes the interest of the state in protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of students, colleagues, and other affected persons is adequately served by a suspension. Such order may contain a requirement that the education practitioner fulfill certain conditions before requesting reinstatement of the suspended certificate, and certain conditions after the reinstatement of the suspended certificate.

(1)(c) The education practitioner lacks personal fitness but the superintendent of public instruction has determined the deficiency is correctable through remedial action and believes the interest of the state in protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of students, colleagues, and other affected persons is adequately served by a suspension which states the education practitioner fulfill certain conditions before requesting reinstatement of the suspended certificate, and certain conditions after the reinstatement of the suspended certificate.

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, the Educator's education certificate should be suspended for unprofessional conduct and/or a behavioral problem which endangers the educational welfare or personal safety of students, teachers, or other colleagues within the educational setting.

III. ORDER

THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Washington Education Certificate No. 370184D of STEVEN COLMUS is **SUSPENDED**. The Educator may not request reinstatement of his education certificate for at least thirty (30) days from the effective date of this ORDER.

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REINSTATEMENT of Steven Colmus' education certificate shall require:

- (1) In addition to any mandatory continuing education, the Educator must successfully complete a course on restraint and isolation, preapproved by OSPI. The Educator will provide OSPI proof of completion of the course prior to requesting reinstatement;
- (2) The Educator must submit a new application, including Character and Fitness Supplement, provided by OPP;
- (3) The Educator must complete a fingerprint-based criminal background check through both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Washington State Patrol;
- (4) 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; AND
- (5) The Educator shall assume all costs of complying with the requirements of this Order.

DATED this 3rd day of October, 2025.

CHRIS REYKDAL
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State of Washington


Darryl E. Colman
Chief Legal and Civil Rights Officer