



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE OF

ANTONIO MORTON
Certificate No. 584507H

OPP No. D24-04-028

FINAL ORDER
OF SUSPENSION

After receiving and investigating a complaint from Seattle 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 ANTONIO MORTON (“Educator”) engaged in acts of unprofessional conduct to include Washington Administrative Code (“WAC”) 181-87-060 and 181-87-050(7)(b), and does hereby SUSPEND the Educator’s Washington Education Certificate No. 584507H 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 25, 2022, the Educator was issued Washington Education Certificate No. 584507H. The Educator’s certificate, a Residency Teacher-First Issue, has no expiration date until the certificate holder has completed two (2) years of full-time employment as a certificated educator and has signed a contract for a third year.
2. During the 2022–23 school year, the Educator was employed by the School District at Cleveland High School as a Resource Teacher for Special Education.

3. On April 19, 2024, the Office of Professional Practices (“OPP”) within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”) received a complaint from Dr. Brent Jones, the Superintendent of the School District, alleging the Educator committed unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-87 for inappropriate physical contact with a student.

4. On May 9, 2023, Student A was walking upstairs within Cleveland High School. The Educator entered the stairway above the student. As Student A turned and approached the Educator, the Educator stepped in front of Student A.

5. Student A attempted to proceed past the Educator. As he did so, the Educator pushed his left shoulder into the student. Student A continued to walk up the flight of stairs and the Educator, using both hands, pushed Student A from behind and grabbed onto Student A’s backpack or clothing.

6. Student A, at the landing between flights, turned around and made a profane gesture with his hand and then continued up a flight of stairs. The Educator followed Student A.

7. The Educator returned down the stairs with Student A following. The Educator had Student A follow him into his classroom for a discussion. Student A audio-recorded that conversation.

8. After approximately two minutes, Student A returned to the stairwell.

9. On May 11, 2023, the Educator was placed on administrative leave by the School District.

10. On June 7, 2023, the Educator participated in an interview with a School District investigator. During the interview, the Educator stated:

- a. As he was first walking down a flight of stairs, Student A approached him coming up a flight of stairs;
- b. Student A immediately raised both his hands and made a profane gesture to him;
- c. He placed one arm to stop Student A to talk to him about the profane gesture;

- d. Denied bumping or pushing Student A and stated the only physical contact that may have occurred was when he extended his arm.
- 11. On February 16, 2024, the School District Human Resources Department issued the Educator a letter stating that non-renewal of his contract would be recommended to the Superintendent.
- 12. On February 28, 2024, the Educator signed a Settlement Agreement with the School District, resigning his employment effective March 25, 2024.
- 13. On November 25, 2024, the Educator participated in an interview with OPP. During the interview, the Educator:
 - a. Stated as he was first walking down a flight of stairs, Student A approached him coming up a flight of stairs;
 - b. Stated that Student A immediately raised both his hands and made a profane gesture to him;
 - c. Stated that he placed one arm to stop Student A to talk to him about the profane gesture;
 - d. Denied bumping or pushing Student A and stated the only physical contact that may have occurred was when he extended his arm; and,
 - e. Stated that he had not had an opportunity to be interviewed or speak with School District personnel during the School District investigation.

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 inappropriate physical contact with a student and WAC 181-87-050(7)(b) for intentional falsification or deliberate misrepresentation of material facts during an official inquiry by the superintendent of public instruction.

4. There is a 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, WAC 181-87-060, WAC 181-87-050(7)(b), the Educator's education certificate should be suspended for unprofessional conduct.

III. ORDER

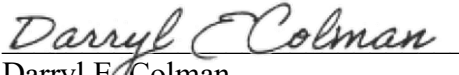
THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Washington Education Certificate No. 584507H of ANTONIO MORTON is **SUSPENDED**. The Educator may not request reinstatement of his education certificate for at least thirty (30) days from the effective date of this ORDER.

REINSTATEMENT of ANTONIO MORTON's education certificate shall require:

- (1) The Educator must submit a new application, including Character and Fitness Supplement, provided by OPP;
- (2) The Educator must complete a fingerprint-based criminal background check through both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Washington State Patrol;
- (3) 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
- (4) The Educator shall assume all costs of complying with the requirements of this Order.

DATED this 14th day of November, 2025.

CHRIS REYKDAL
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State of Washington


Darryl E. Colman
Chief Legal and Civil Rights Officer