

Before the School Ethics Commission
OAL Docket No.: EEC-03348-23
SEC Docket No.: C105-22
Final Decision

**Catherine Coyle,
*Complainant***

v.

**Natalia Ioffe
Jersey City Board of Education, Hudson County,
*Respondent***

I. Procedural History

The above-captioned matter arises from a Complaint that was filed on November 7, 2022, by Catherine Coyle (Complainant), alleging that Natalia Ioffe (Respondent), a member of the Jersey City Board of Education (Board), violated the School Ethics Act (Act), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-21 *et seq.* More specifically, the Complaint alleges that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24(b), as well as *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(e) of the Code of Ethics for School Board Members (Code). Respondent filed an Answer to Complaint (Answer) on December 2, 2022.

At its special meeting on January 31, 2023, the Commission voted not to find probable cause for the alleged violation of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24(b). Having found no probable cause for any subsection of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24 (“Prohibited acts”), pursuant to N.J.A.C 6A:28-10.9,¹ the Commission voted to transmit the remaining Code allegation in the Complaint to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for a plenary hearing where Complainant shall carry the burden to prove that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(e).

At the OAL, Complainant submitted correspondence dated June 26, 2023, indicating that she seeks a voluntary dismissal, with prejudice, of this matter. The ALJ issued an Initial Decision on the same date, concluding that this matter is no longer a contested case and dismissing the matter.

At its meeting on July 25, 2023, the Commission discussed the above-captioned matter and voted to adopt the Initial Decision’s dismissal related to same.

¹ This citation refers to the regulation that was in effect at the time of the probable cause determination.

II. Decision

Following a careful and independent review of the full record, the Commission adopts the Initial Decision as its Final Decision.

Consequently, this matter is hereby dismissed.

Robert W. Bender, Chairperson

Mailing Date: July 25, 2023

***Resolution Adopting Final Decision (Dismissal)
in Connection with C105-22***

Whereas, at a special meeting on January 31, 2023, the School Ethics Commission (Commission) voted to transmit the within matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for a plenary hearing; and

Whereas, while at the OAL, Complainant submitted correspondence dated June 26, 2023, indicating that she seeks a voluntary dismissal, with prejudice, of this matter; and

Whereas, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision dated June 26, 2023, concluding that this matter is no longer a contested case and dismissing the matter; and

Whereas, at a meeting on July 25, 2023, the Commission considered the Initial Decision and discussed adopting the Initial Decision as its Final Decision; and

Whereas, at its meeting on July 25, 2023, the Commission reviewed and voted to approve the within decision as accurately memorializing its actions/findings; and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, the Commission hereby adopts the within decision as its Final Decision, and directs its staff to notify all parties to this action of its decision herein.

Robert W. Bender, Chairperson

I hereby certify that this Resolution was duly adopted by the School Ethics Commission at its meeting on July 25, 2023.

Brigid C. Martens, Acting Director
School Ethics Commission