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State Office of Administrative Hearings

Kristofer S. Monson
Chief Administrative Law Judge

June 12, 2026

Trevin Ware

VIA EFILE TEXAS

Heather Castillo

VIA EFILE TEXAS

RE: SOAH Docket No. 701-25-13836.EC;
Texas Education Agency v. Dalois Woodard

Dear Parties:

Please find attached a Proposal for Decision in this case.

Exceptions and replies may be filed by any party in accordance with 1 Texas Administrative Code section 155.507(b), a SOAH rule which may be found at www.soah.texas.gov.

CC: Service List

**BEFORE THE
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE
HEARINGS**

**TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY,
PETITIONER
v.
DALOIS WOODARD,
RESPONDENT**

PROPOSAL FOR DECISION

The staff (Staff) of the Texas Education Agency, on behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), seeks disciplinary sanctions against Dalois Woodard's educator certificate based on allegations that she engaged in inappropriate physical conduct toward students and failed to report physical mistreatment of students by paraprofessionals under her supervision. Staff contends that Respondent's conduct violated the Educators' Code of Ethics (Code of Ethics) and SBEC rules and rendered her unworthy to instruct or supervise the youth of Texas. After considering the applicable law, evidence, and arguments of the parties, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) concludes that Staff proved some, but not all,

of its allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. The ALJ recommends that Respondent's educator certificate be suspended for one year, fully probated, conditioned upon Respondent's completion of an eight-hour course in classroom management and/or professional boundaries.

I. NOTICE, JURISDICTION, AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Notice and jurisdiction were undisputed and are thus discussed only in the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

On April 29, 2026, ALJ Katerina DeAngelo of the State Office of Administrative Hearings convened a hearing on the merits via Zoom videoconference. Attorney Trevin Ware represented Staff. Attorney Heather Castillo represented Respondent. The record closed that same day, upon the filing of admitted exhibits.

II. STAFF'S ALLEGATIONS

Staff alleges that Respondent engaged in inappropriate physical contact with special-education students and failed to report physical mistreatment of students by paraprofessionals working under her supervision. Specifically, Staff alleges that Respondent: hit a student on the head; carried a student upside down across the classroom; hit a student's arm with, and threatened a student with, a yardstick; failed to report a paraprofessional, Tambra Gipson, placing a trash bag over a student's head, hitting students with a shoe, and striking a student on the head; and failed to

report a paraprofessional, Veronica Espinoza, spraying a student with a canned substance while under Respondent's supervision.¹

Based on this alleged conduct, Staff asserts that Respondent is unworthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth in violation of 19 Texas Administrative Code (Code) section 249.15(b)(2). Staff further alleges that Respondent violated provisions of the Code of Ethics; failed to comply with mandatory reporting obligations; engaged in Priority 1 conduct; and engaged in conduct constituting an offense directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession.²

III. APPLICABLE LAW

SBEC regulates and oversees all aspects of the certification and standards of conduct of public school educators.³ SBEC may discipline an educator who is unworthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth.⁴ “Unworthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state” means the absence “of those moral, mental, and psychological qualities that are required” to enable an educator to achieve SBEC’s goals and mission.⁵

¹ Staff’s Second Amended Petition (filed Aug. 26, 2025). The Second Amended Petition also alleges that Respondent engaged in inappropriate conduct by tickling a student. No evidence was presented regarding the alleged tickling incident. Accordingly, the allegation is not further addressed in this Proposal for Decision.

² Second Amended Petition.

³ Tex. Educ. Code §§ 21.031, .041.

⁴ Code § 249.15(b)(2).

⁵ Code § 249.3(60).

SBEC may also discipline an educator who violates provisions of the Code of Ethics.⁶ Staff alleges Respondent violated the following standards:

- Standard 1.7: The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws.⁷
- Standard 1.9: The educator shall not make threats of violence against students.⁸
- Standard 1.10: The educator shall be of good moral character and worthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth.⁹
- Standard 3.2: The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat students in a manner that adversely affects or endangers their learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.¹⁰
- Standard 3.5: The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of students.¹¹
- Standard 3.8: The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.¹²

⁶ Code § 249.15(b)(3).

⁷ Code § 247.2(1)(G).

⁸ Code § 247.2(1)(I).

⁹ Code § 247.2(1)(J).

¹⁰ Code § 247.2(3)(B).

¹¹ Code § 247.2(3)(E).

¹² Code § 247.2(3)(H).

SBEC may further discipline an educator who fails to report or hinders the reporting of child abuse or educator misconduct.¹³ SBEC may also discipline an educator who engages in Priority 1 conduct presenting a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor.¹⁴ Additionally, SBEC may discipline an educator who commits an act that would constitute an offense directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession, regardless of whether there has been a criminal conviction.¹⁵

SBEC may place restrictions on, suspend, or revoke a certificate; issue a reprimand; or impose additional conditions necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and professional development of the educator.¹⁶ Staff has the burden of proving its allegations by a preponderance of the evidence.¹⁷

IV. EVIDENCE

Staff offered, and the ALJ admitted, Staff Exhibits 1 and 3 through 13 into evidence.¹⁸ Staff also presented the testimony of Sonia Crockett and Respondent. Respondent did not offer any exhibits.

¹³ Code § 249.15(b)(4).

¹⁴ Code §§ 249.15(b)(9), .14(k)(1).

¹⁵ Code §§ 249.15(b)(10), .16(c).

¹⁶ Code § 249.15(a).

¹⁷ 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 155.427; *Granek v. Tex. State Bd. of Med. Exam'rs*, 172 S.W.3d 761, 777 (Tex. App.—Austin 2005, no pet.).

¹⁸ Staff Exhibits 10-12 were admitted as confidential exhibits.

A. BACKGROUND

Respondent holds a Texas Educator Certificate in Special Education for Grades EC-12.¹⁹ During the 2021-2022 school year, Respondent was employed by Aldine Independent School District (Aldine ISD) as the teacher of record in a Structured Learning Community (SLC) classroom at Raymond Elementary School.²⁰ The SLC classroom served special-education students, many of whom were nonverbal or had limited verbal abilities and required highly structured instructional support. As the teacher of record, Respondent supervised paraprofessionals assigned to the classroom and was responsible for instruction, classroom management, and student supervision. During the 2021-2022 school year, the classroom included paraprofessionals Ms. Gipson and Ms. Espinoza.

In June 2022, Aldine ISD administrators began investigating concerns regarding student treatment after a parent reported behavioral changes in a student and requested review of video footage. Following review of the videos, including footage from Respondent's classroom, school administrators reported the incidents to Child Protective Services (CPS) and Aldine ISD police.²¹

Two videos were admitted into evidence: Video 1, an approximately 11-second video recorded on January 6, 2022, at approximately 10:39 a.m.; and Video 2, an approximately 44-second video recorded on January 6, 2022, at approximately

¹⁹ Staff Exs. 1, 13.

²⁰ Staff Exs. 7-8. Respondent resigned from Aldine ISD on June 8, 2022.

²¹ Ms. Crockett testified that she did not know the outcome of any CPS investigation and did not know whether criminal charges were filed.

1:52 p.m.²² Video 1 depicts Respondent's classroom. In the video, Ms. Gipson is seen placing a plastic trash bag over the head of a student and removing it a few seconds later. Respondent is visible standing nearby and facing in the direction of Ms. Gipson during the incident.²³

Video 2 also depicts Respondent's classroom. In the video, Ms. Gipson is seated near a student lying on a beanbag while holding a shoe in her hand. Ms. Gipson moves toward the student and bends toward the student's head area. Because Ms. Gipson's body obstructs the camera's view, the student's head is not fully visible during portions of the interaction. Ms. Gipson later moves toward another student seated underneath a table while continuing to hold the shoe. Although portions of the interaction underneath the table are difficult to see because of the camera angle and obstructions within the classroom, the video appears to show Ms. Gipson making contact with the student's face using the shoe at least once, and possibly twice. The amount of force used, if any, cannot be determined from the video.²⁴

During Video 2, Respondent is seated at her desk facing generally in the direction of Ms. Gipson and the students. An American flag is positioned beside or slightly in front of Respondent's desk near the area where several students are seated on the floor. The flag partially obstructs the camera's view of certain interactions

²² Staff Exs. 10-11.

²³ Staff Ex. 10.

²⁴ Staff Ex. 11.

occurring near the floor area underneath the table and adjacent to Respondent's desk.²⁵

B. SONIA CROCKETT'S TESTIMONY

Ms. Crockett is an assistant principal for Aldine ISD and has served in that role since approximately the 2021-2022 school year. Her duties include evaluating and supervising teachers and paraprofessionals, handling student discipline, addressing special-education matters, coaching teachers, reviewing lesson plans, investigating allegations of misconduct, and assisting with overall campus operations. She testified that she is familiar with Aldine ISD policies and procedures.

According to Ms. Crockett, the students in the SLC classroom were among the most vulnerable students on campus because many were nonverbal or had limited verbal abilities. She explained that safeguards for those students included ethical-conduct training, professional-development training, classroom-management training, and classroom cameras used to review concerns or discrepancies. She testified that Aldine ISD provided ethical-conduct training at the beginning of the school year and again near the end of the school year as a refresher.²⁶ Ms. Crockett stated that Respondent attended both trainings.

Ms. Crockett testified that she requested and reviewed video footage from Respondent's classroom after concerns were raised regarding student treatment.

²⁵ Staff Ex. 11.

²⁶ See Staff Ex. 6 (Aldine ISD Ethical Conduct Guidelines (Guidelines) state that ethics training was required annually).

After reviewing the footage, she concluded that the videos depicted inappropriate conduct toward students.

Regarding Video 1, Ms. Crockett confirmed that the video depicted Ms. Gipson placing a plastic trash bag over a student's head and then removing it shortly thereafter. Ms. Crockett testified that such conduct violated Aldine ISD policy. She further testified that Respondent was standing nearby and facing in the direction of Ms. Gipson during the incident. Although Ms. Crockett acknowledged that Respondent may not have observed the entire interaction, she testified that Respondent turned toward Ms. Gipson and the student, and would have been able to observe Ms. Gipson removing the bag from the student's head.

Regarding Video 2, Ms. Crockett testified that Ms. Gipson's conduct involving the shoe was also inconsistent with Aldine ISD policy. She believed Respondent was able to observe the conduct because Respondent was seated at her desk facing in the direction of Ms. Gipson and the students. Ms. Crockett testified that the first interaction involving the shoe was not obstructed by the American flag and that she observed Ms. Gipson make contact with a student's face using the shoe. She further testified that she observed Ms. Gipson make contact with the student seated underneath the table using the shoe on two occasions. Although Ms. Crockett acknowledged that the American flag partially obstructed portions of the camera's view, she maintained that Respondent's position at the desk provided a clearer vantage point than the camera angle.

Ms. Crockett also testified that she reviewed additional videos during the investigation. According to Ms. Crockett, one of those videos depicted Respondent touching or hitting a student with a yardstick. Ms. Crockett testified that she could not determine the amount of force used but considered the conduct inappropriate and inconsistent with Aldine ISD policy.²⁷ She testified that there was no appropriate reason for a teacher to hit, tap, or touch a student with a yardstick; and that such conduct would constitute physical mistreatment.

Ms. Crockett further testified that Aldine ISD staff members were trained that suspected abuse or inappropriate conduct toward students must be reported to law enforcement or CPS within 48 hours, and also reported to the campus principal immediately.²⁸ According to Ms. Crockett, Respondent did not report the conduct depicted in the videos to the principal; and Ms. Crockett was unaware of Respondent making any report to CPS or law enforcement.

Ms. Crockett ultimately testified that Respondent failed to act appropriately because, as the teacher of record, Respondent had a duty to report inappropriate conduct occurring in the classroom. She stated that the conduct depicted in the videos constituted physical mistreatment of vulnerable students and should have been reported to CPS and campus administration within 48 hours.

²⁷ The video referenced by Ms. Crockett is not in evidence.

²⁸ See Staff Ex. 6 (Guidelines require staff members to report suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or CPS, notify the principal immediately, and submit a written report within 48 hours. Staff members are also required to comply with the Guidelines, respect the rights of students, remain professional at all times, avoid handling students in an aggressive manner, deal with students in a respectful manner, and not place hands on students unless for protection from imminent danger).

C. RESPONDENT’S TESTIMONY

Respondent testified that, at the time of the incidents at issue, she was in her second year as a teacher. Before becoming a teacher, she worked as a paraprofessional for approximately five years. She stated that the 2021-2022 school year was her first year teaching in a SLC classroom and that she did not receive meaningful specialized training for the classroom or the students assigned to it.

Regarding Video 1, Respondent testified that she could only see the back of Ms. Gipson and could not see what was occurring in front of Ms. Gipson. She believed the incident occurred during lunch. She explained that one student frequently became messy while eating lunch and that staff would sometimes create a makeshift smock from a trash bag to protect the student’s clothing when the student did not have a change of clothes. According to Respondent, this occurred “pretty much” daily during lunch periods. Respondent testified that the intended process was to cut the trash bag before placing it over the student so it would function as a smock. Respondent acknowledged that Ms. Gipson placed the trash bag over the student’s head without first cutting it.

Respondent agreed that placing a trash bag over a student’s head would not be appropriate conduct and stated that, if she observed such conduct, it would be reportable. Although Respondent initially testified that the conduct would not necessarily be unsafe, she later clarified that placing a bag over a student’s head for more than a couple of seconds would be unsafe.

Regarding Video 2, Respondent denied seeing Ms. Gipson strike or touch a student with a shoe. She explained that, at the time of the incident, she was supposed to have a duty-free conference period and remained in the classroom because Ms. Gipson could not supervise three students alone. Respondent acknowledged that, as the teacher of record, she remained responsible for classroom supervision even during her conference period. According to Respondent, her attention was directed downward toward paperwork, grading, and her computer. She testified that she was not looking toward the students and did not hear any unusual sounds, impacts, or student reactions that would have alerted her to inappropriate conduct.

Respondent testified that there was “nothing reportable” from her perspective because she neither saw nor heard misconduct occurring. Respondent acknowledged that, from the camera’s perspective, it appeared that Ms. Gipson may have been hitting or slapping a student with a shoe. However, Respondent maintained that she did not observe that conduct from her vantage point at the desk. She stated that, if she had seen or heard a paraprofessional strike a student with a shoe, hand, or any other object, she would have reported the conduct.

Respondent further testified that school administrators met with her and asked her to prepare a written statement. In that statement, Respondent wrote that she redirected one student to complete testing, described Ms. Gipson as “playing with” another student, and stated that Ms. Espinoza was “spraying the classroom w/Lysol bc of the virus going around the room.” Respondent also acknowledged that she “picked [a student] up upside down to carry him to his spot” after the student returned from the restroom and the two were “playing tag.” Respondent further

stated that the classroom was “filled w/love, routines, & different personalities” and that she “can’t speak on what happens when I’m on [her] conference.”²⁹

Respondent did not recall any interaction involving a student and a yardstick. However, she testified that it would never be appropriate to hit a student with a yardstick, including for purposes of redirection. Respondent also addressed allegations involving carrying a student upside down. She explained that the student frequently hung upside down from monkey bars during recess and that she later researched the behavior and learned it could help regulate or calm the student’s nervous system. According to Respondent, she carried the student upside down from recess because the student did not want to leave the monkey bars and the technique helped calm the student and transition him back into the classroom.

Respondent also addressed the allegation involving spraying in the classroom. Respondent testified that she did not observe Ms. Espinoza spray a student with Lysol or any other substance. She explained that her written statement referred to Ms. Espinoza “spraying the classroom w/Lysol” because COVID or another virus was going around the classroom at the time. Respondent denied ever spraying a student herself and testified that, if she had observed a paraprofessional spray a student with Lysol or another substance, she would have reported the conduct.

Respondent testified that, after the meeting with administrators, she resigned from Aldine ISD because she “didn’t want to go through all the malarkey” and wanted to move on, although she testified that she did not anticipate the present

²⁹ Staff Ex. 4.

proceeding would result from her resignation. She stated that CPS later contacted her regarding the matter. According to Respondent, she met with a CPS investigator, reviewed the video footage, and was later informed by letter that CPS found no child abuse.³⁰ She further stated that she was never contacted by Aldine ISD police or Harris County law enforcement.

Respondent stated that, after resigning from Aldine ISD, she obtained employment with Spring Independent School District, where she has worked as a co-teacher and athletic coach without further incident. She stated that she was named Teacher of the Month in September 2022 and was recently nominated for Coach of the Year. She added that she loves teaching and has worked with children since she was 16 years old. She stated that she is the parent of a special needs child and strives to treat students the way she would want her own child treated in school. Respondent denied that she was the person described in the allegations against her and testified that she had never previously been in trouble. She further testified that she is familiar with, and respects, the Code of Ethics and related training.

V. ANALYSIS

A. UPSIDE-DOWN CARRY INCIDENT

Respondent admitted carrying a student upside down. She explained that the student frequently engaged in upside-down sensory behavior on the playground and that she believed carrying the student upside down helped calm him and transition

³⁰ Respondent testified that she no longer possessed the CPS letter because her home sustained damage during the winter freeze.

him back into the classroom. Although Respondent offered that explanation, the conduct was inappropriate. The student was nonverbal, could not readily communicate discomfort or distress, and was being physically transported through the classroom in an inverted position. The evidence does not show that the student presented an imminent danger to himself or others or that physical intervention was otherwise necessary. The Guidelines provide that employees should not place hands on a student unless protecting that student or another person from imminent danger.³¹

Respondent was acting in her role as the teacher of record for a nonverbal special-education student during the school day. She used the upside-down carry as a means of managing the student's behavior and transitioning him back into the classroom. A reasonably prudent educator would not physically transport a nonverbal student in an inverted position as a classroom-management or transition technique in the absence of an emergency or safety concern. Under these circumstances, the conduct created an unnecessary risk to the student's safety and fell below the standard expected of a reasonably prudent educator. Accordingly, Staff proved by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 3.2 and Standard 3.8 and Code sections 247.2(3)(B) and 247.2(3)(H).

The evidence does not show, however, that Respondent violated Standard 3.5. Respondent testified that her purpose was to calm and transition the student, not to harm him, and there is no evidence that the student suffered an injury. While Respondent exercised poor professional judgment, the record does not establish that

³¹ See Staff Ex. 6

she intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engaged in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student. Therefore, Staff did not prove a violation of Standard 3.5 based on this incident.

B. YARDSTICK AND HEAD-STRIKE ALLEGATIONS

The allegations that Respondent struck or threatened a student with a yardstick and struck a student on the head were not proved by a preponderance of the evidence. The yardstick allegation was supported only through Ms. Crockett's testimony describing a video that was not admitted into evidence. Ms. Crockett acknowledged that she could not determine the amount of force involved, and Respondent testified that she did not recall any such incident. Without the video, the ALJ cannot independently evaluate the nature of the contact, the amount of force used, or whether any threat was made. Similarly, the allegation that Respondent struck a student on the head is not supported by the evidence. No video depicting that conduct was admitted into evidence, and Staff presented only a general allegation in its petition that the conduct occurred. Accordingly, Staff failed to establish these allegations.

C. FAILURE TO REPORT – VIDEOS 1 AND 2

The evidence establishes that, on January 6, 2022, Ms. Gipson placed a plastic trash bag over a student's head and removed it a few seconds later. Respondent testified that she believed the interaction involved the classroom's routine practice of using a trash bag as a makeshift smock during lunch. That explanation is not unreasonable as to the initial placement of the bag because Respondent testified that the practice occurred regularly in the classroom for a reasonable purpose. However,

Respondent acknowledged that placing an uncut trash bag over a student's head would be inappropriate and reportable conduct. Ms. Crockett credibly testified, and the video supports the testimony, that Respondent was standing nearby, facing in the direction of Ms. Gipson and the student, and turned toward them during the interaction. Even accepting Respondent's explanation regarding the intended use of the bag, observing a staff member remove an uncut trash bag from a nonverbal student's head was sufficient to create reasonable suspicion that inappropriate conduct had occurred.

Moreover, the evidence establishes that, approximately three hours later, Ms. Gipson repeatedly approached students while holding a shoe and made contact with at least one student's face using the shoe. Respondent remained seated nearby and retained supervisory responsibility for the classroom. Respondent testified that she was focused on paperwork and did not see Ms. Gipson strike or touch a student with the shoe. The ALJ does not find that Respondent necessarily appreciated the full nature of Ms. Gipson's conduct as it occurred. The issue is whether Respondent had enough information to reasonably suspect that inappropriate conduct may have occurred and, therefore, had a duty to report it.

The video shows objectively-concerning conduct by a paraprofessional toward vulnerable, nonverbal special-education students in Respondent's classroom. Ms. Crockett testified that Respondent's location in the classroom provided a better view of the students than the camera angle and that at least part of the interaction was unobstructed. Respondent's written statement, in which she described Ms. Gipson as "playing with" a student during the same general time period,

corroborates that Ms. Gipson was interacting with students while Respondent remained in the classroom.

The Guidelines require staff members to report suspected abuse or inappropriate conduct to campus administration and to law enforcement or CPS.³² The reporting requirement does not require certainty that abuse occurred. It requires reporting when an educator has reasonable suspicion that inappropriate conduct may have occurred. Considering the conduct shown in the videos, Respondent's proximity to the interactions, her role as the teacher of record, the vulnerability of the students involved, and her awareness that Ms. Gipson was interacting with students, Respondent had enough information to trigger her reporting obligations. She did not report either the plastic bag over the head or the shoe conduct to the principal, law enforcement, or CPS. Accordingly, Staff established by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 1.7 and Code sections 247.2(1)(G) and 249.15(b)(4).

Staff also alleges that Respondent's failure to report constituted neglect under Standard 3.5. Although Respondent failed to satisfy her reporting obligations, the evidence does not show that Respondent intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly neglected a student within the meaning of Standard 3.5. The record shows that Respondent failed to recognize and report conduct that should have been reported. That failure supports the reporting violations discussed above but does not establish

³² See Staff Ex. 6.

physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse under Standard 3.5. Accordingly, Staff failed to establish a violation of Standard 3.5 on a neglect allegation.

D. SPRAYING ALLEGATION

The allegation involving Ms. Espinoza spraying a student with a canned substance was not proved by a preponderance of the evidence. Respondent's written statement refers only to Ms. Espinoza spraying Lysol in the classroom because of illness. No admitted video depicts a student being sprayed, and the record does not establish that reportable misconduct occurred. Accordingly, Staff failed to establish this allegation.

E. PRIORITY 1 CONDUCT

Staff also alleges that Respondent engaged in Priority 1 conduct under Code sections 249.15(b)(9) and 249.14(k)(1). Priority 1 conduct includes conduct that presents a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, including the specific categories of serious misconduct identified in the rule. The evidence shows that Respondent exercised poor professional judgment in carrying a student upside down and failed to report conduct that created reasonable suspicion of inappropriate treatment of students by a classroom paraprofessional. That conduct was serious and supports discipline. However, the evidence does not show that Respondent's conduct created the type or degree of risk contemplated by the Priority 1 rule. Staff did not prove injury, intentional mistreatment, knowing disregard of student safety, criminal conduct, or any conduct of comparable seriousness to the Priority 1 categories identified in the rule. Accordingly, Staff failed

to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent engaged in Priority 1 conduct.

F. UNWORTHINESS AND CRIMINAL-OFFENSE ALLEGATIONS

The evidence does not show by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent is unworthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state under Code section 249.15(b)(2) or Standard 1.10. Although Respondent exercised poor judgment and failed to satisfy important professional obligations, the record does not demonstrate the absence of the moral, mental, and psychological qualities necessary to instruct or supervise Texas youth. The record also reflects that Respondent has no prior disciplinary history and has continued working in education without additional disciplinary incidents.

Likewise, Staff failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent committed an act constituting an offense directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession under Code sections 249.15(b)(10) and 249.16(c). Although the proven conduct raises concerns regarding student safety and professional judgment, the evidence does not establish the elements of a qualifying criminal offense.

G. SANCTION

SBEC has a range of sanction options available. Staff requests a one-year suspension and completion of an eight-hour course in classroom management and/or professional boundaries. The proven violations involve inappropriate physical handling of a nonverbal special-education student and the failure to report

suspected inappropriate conduct involving vulnerable students. These violations reflect poor professional judgment and a failure to satisfy important professional obligations. A reprimand would not adequately address the seriousness of the misconduct. Revocation would exceed what the evidence supports given the absence of intentional abuse, prior disciplinary history, and proof that Respondent engaged in Priority 1 conduct or is unworthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth.

At the same time, the record reflects significant mitigating circumstances. Respondent was in only her second year of teaching and her first year in an SLC classroom. Respondent testified that the training she received did not provide meaningful specialized training for her SLC classroom assignment. Respondent has no prior disciplinary history with SBEC and has continued working in education without further disciplinary incidents.

Under these circumstances, a suspension is warranted, but an active suspension would be greater than necessary. A one-year probated suspension appropriately recognizes the seriousness of the violations while also accounting for the mitigating evidence and Respondent's subsequent employment history. Therefore, the ALJ recommends that SBEC suspend Respondent's educator certificate for one year, fully probated, conditioned upon Respondent's completion of an eight-hour course in classroom management and/or professional boundaries and compliance with the Code of Ethics and SBEC rules during the probationary period. If Respondent fails to satisfy any condition of probation, the suspension shall become active for the remainder of the probationary period.

In support of this recommendation, the ALJ makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

IV. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Dalois Woodard (Respondent) holds a Texas Educator Certificate issued by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Special Education for Grades EC-12.
2. At all times material to this case, Respondent's certificate was in full force and effect.
3. During the 2021-2022 school year, Respondent was employed by Aldine Independent School District (Aldine ISD) as the teacher of record in a Structured Learning Community (SLC) classroom at Raymond Elementary School.
4. The SLC classroom served special-education students, many of whom were nonverbal or had limited verbal abilities and required highly structured instructional support.
5. As the teacher of record, Respondent was responsible for instruction, classroom management, and student supervision, including supervision of paraprofessionals assigned to the classroom.
6. During the 2021-2022 school year, paraprofessionals Tandra Gipson and Veronica Espinoza were assigned to Respondent's classroom.
7. Respondent attended Aldine ISD ethical-conduct training.
8. Respondent characterized the training she received as not providing meaningful specialized training for her SLC classroom assignment.
9. Respondent was in her second year of teaching and her first year assigned to an SLC classroom during the 2021-2022 school year.
10. The Aldine ISD Ethical Conduct Guidelines (Guidelines) require staff members to report suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or

Child Protective Services (CPS), notify the principal immediately, and submit a written report within 48 hours. The Guidelines also provide that employees should not place hands on a student unless protecting that student or another person from imminent danger.

11. Respondent carried a student upside down through the classroom while transitioning the student from recess back to the classroom.
12. The circumstances surrounding the upside-down carrying incident did not present imminent danger to the student or others.
13. Carrying a nonverbal special-education student upside down through a classroom created an unnecessary risk to the student's physical safety and violated the Guidelines.
14. On January 6, 2022, at approximately 10:39 a.m., Video 1 captured Ms. Gipson placing a plastic trash bag over a student's head and removing it a few seconds later.
15. During the incident depicted in Video 1, Respondent was standing nearby and facing in the direction of Ms. Gipson and the student.
16. Respondent acknowledged that placing an uncut trash bag over a student's head would be inappropriate and reportable conduct.
17. On January 6, 2022, at approximately 1:52 p.m., Video 2 captured Ms. Gipson repeatedly moving toward students while holding a shoe and appearing to make contact with a student's face using the shoe at least once.
18. During the incident depicted in Video 2, Respondent was seated at her desk a short distance away and retained supervisory responsibility for the classroom.
19. Respondent's written statement noted that Ms. Gipson was interacting with students during the time period depicted in Video 2.
20. Respondent did not report the conduct depicted in Videos 1 or 2 to the campus principal, law enforcement, or CPS.
21. Respondent resigned from Aldine ISD on June 8, 2022.

22. Following her resignation, Respondent obtained employment with Spring Independent School District, where she has continued working without additional disciplinary incidents.
23. Respondent has no prior disciplinary history with SBEC.
24. On March 6, 2025, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), on behalf of SBEC, referred the matter against Respondent to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) for a contested case hearing.
25. On March 18, 2025, TEA staff (Staff) served Respondent with a Notice of Hearing.
26. On August 25, 2025, Staff served Respondent with a Second Amended Petition.
27. On February 18, 2026, a SOAH Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued an order granting a motion for continuance and resetting the hearing to April 29, 2026.
28. Together, the Notice of Hearing, Second Amended Petition, and February 18, 2026 order contained a statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing; a statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing was to be held; a reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved; and either a short, plain statement of the factual matters asserted or an attachment that incorporated by reference the factual matters asserted in the complaint or petition.
29. On April 29, 2026, SOAH ALJ Katerina DeAngelo convened a hearing on the merits via Zoom videoconference. Attorney Trevin Ware represented Staff. Attorney Heather Castillo represented Respondent.
30. The record closed on April 29, 2026, upon the filing of admitted exhibits.

V. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. SBEC has jurisdiction over this matter. Tex. Educ. Code §§ 21.031, .035, .041(b).

2. SOAH has jurisdiction over the hearing in this proceeding, including the authority to issue a proposal for decision with findings of fact and conclusions of law. Tex. Gov't Code ch. 2003; 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.4.
3. Respondent received proper and timely notice of hearing. Tex. Gov't Code §§ 2001.051-.052.
4. Staff had the burden to prove its allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 155.427; *Granek v. Tex. State Bd. of Med. Exam'rs*, 172 S.W.3d 761, 777 (Tex. App.—Austin 2005, no pet.).
5. SBEC regulates and oversees all aspects of the certification and standards of conduct of public-school educators. Tex. Educ. Code §§ 21.031, .041.
6. SBEC may discipline an educator who is unworthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.15(b)(2).
7. “Unworthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state” means the absence “of those moral, mental, and psychological qualities that are required” to enable an educator to achieve SBEC’s goals and mission. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.3(60).
8. SBEC may discipline an educator who violates provisions of Educators’ Code of Ethics (Code of Ethics). 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.15(b)(3).
9. As relevant here, an educator violates the Code of Ethics by:
 - Failing to comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(1)(G), Standard 1.7;
 - Making threats of violence against students. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(1)(I), Standard 1.9;
 - Failing to be of good moral character and worthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(1)(J), Standard 1.10;
 - Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treating students in a manner that adversely affects or endangers their learning, physical health,

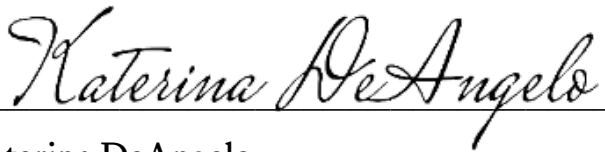
mental health, or safety. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(3)(B), Standard 3.2;

- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engaging in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of students. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(3)(E), Standard 3.5; and
 - Failing to maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 247.2(3)(H), Standard 3.8.
10. SBEC may discipline an educator who fails to report or hinders the reporting of child abuse or educator misconduct. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.15(b)(4).
 11. SBEC may discipline an educator who engages in Priority 1 conduct under 19 Texas Administrative Code sections 249.15(b)(9) and 249.14(k)(1).
 12. SBEC may discipline an educator who commits an act that would constitute an offense directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession, regardless of whether there has been a criminal conviction. 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 249.15(b)(10), .16(c).
 13. Staff proved by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 3.2 of the Code of Ethics and 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(3)(B), by carrying a nonverbal special-education student upside down through a classroom in a manner that created an unnecessary risk to the student's physical safety.
 14. Staff proved by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 3.8 of the Code of Ethics and 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(3)(H), by carrying a nonverbal special-education student upside down through a classroom in a manner that fell below the reasonably prudent educator standard.
 15. Staff proved by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 1.7 of the Code of Ethics and 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(1)(G), by failing to comply with the reporting requirements contained in the Guidelines.

16. Staff proved by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated 19 Texas Administrative Code section 249.15(b)(4) by failing to report Ms. Gipson's conduct depicted in Videos 1 and 2.
17. Staff failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 3.5 of the Code of Ethics and 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(3)(E).
18. Staff failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 1.9 of the Code of Ethics, 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(1)(I).
19. Staff failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent violated Standard 1.10 of the Code of Ethics, 19 Texas Administrative Code section 247.2(1)(J), or that Respondent is unworthy to instruct or supervise Texas youth under 19 Texas Administrative Code section 249.15(b)(2).
20. Staff failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent engaged in Priority 1 conduct under 19 Texas Administrative Code sections 249.15(b)(9) and 249.14(k)(1).
21. Staff failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Respondent committed an act constituting an offense directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession under 19 Texas Administrative Code sections 249.15(b)(10) and 249.16(c).
22. SBEC may place restrictions on, suspend, or revoke a certificate; issue a reprimand; or impose additional conditions necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and professional development of an educator. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 249.15(a).
23. A one-year probated suspension of Respondent's educator certificate, conditioned upon completion of an eight-hour course in classroom management and/or professional boundaries and compliance with the Code of Ethics and SBEC rules during the probationary period, is a reasonable and proportionate sanction for the violations established by a preponderance of the evidence.

24. If Respondent fails to satisfy any condition of probation, the suspension shall become active for the remainder of the probationary period.

Signed June 12, 2026

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Katerina DeAngelo", is written over a horizontal line.

Katerina DeAngelo

Presiding Administrative Law Judge

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