

***Before the School Ethics Commission
OAL Docket No.: EEC-09539-22
Agency Docket No. 407-11/25
SEC Docket No.: C82-22
Resolution of Censure***

**Pio Pennisi, Thomas Cassio, Jim Giannakis, Keith Both, Divon Pender, John Farinella and
William Seesselberg,
Complainants**

v.

**Deborah Boyle,
South Plainfield Board of Education, Middlesex County
Respondent**

Whereas, the above-captioned matter arises from a Complaint that was filed with the School Ethics Commission (Commission) on August 23, 2022, by Pio Pennisi, Thomas Cassio, Jim Giannakis, Keith Both, Divon Pender, John Farinella, William Seesselberg, and Noreen Tansey Lishak¹ (Complainants), alleging that Deborah Boyle (Respondent), violated multiple provisions of the School Ethics Act (Act); and

Whereas, at a special meeting on October 17, 2022, the Commission adopted a letter decision transmitting the matter to the Office of Administrative Law for the alleged violations of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(c), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(e), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(g) and *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(i) of the Code of Ethics for School Board Members (Code); and

Whereas, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued an Initial Decision dated August 29, 2025, concluding that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(c), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(e), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(g) and *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(i), and recommending a penalty of reprimand; and

Whereas, Respondent and Petitioners did not file exceptions to the Initial Decision; and

Whereas, at its meeting on November 25, 2025, the Commission voted to adopt the Initial Decision's factual findings, and the legal conclusions that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(c), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(e), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(g) and *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-24.1(i), but voted to modify the recommended penalty to a censure; and

¹ Superintendent Noreen Tansey Lishak was listed as a Complainant on the Complaint in this matter, but it appears her name was inadvertently omitted from the transmittal of the file to the Office of Administrative Law.

Whereas, pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-29(c), the Commission's decision was forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for final determination on the recommended penalty; and

Whereas, Respondent did not file exceptions to the recommended penalty of censure or an appeal of the Commission's finding of a violation of the Act with the Commissioner of Education; and

Whereas, the Commissioner of Education issued a final decision on January 16, 2026, concurring with the Commission's determination that Respondent violated the Act and the recommended penalty of censure; and

Whereas, *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-9.11(d) provides that for a penalty of censure, suspension or removal, a Resolution shall be adopted at the Commission's next meeting following the Commissioner's imposition of the sanction, and the Resolution shall be read at the Board's next public meeting following adoption by the Commission, shall be posted in such places as the Board posts its public notices for no less than thirty (30) days, shall be published online on the District's website, if available, for no less than thirty (30) days, and the reading of the resolution shall be memorialized in the Board's meeting minutes, and once approved, a copy of the minutes shall be forwarded to the Commission; and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Commission adopts this Resolution stating that Respondent is hereby **CENSURED** as a penalty for having violated the Act as set forth herein; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Board is ordered to read this Resolution at its next regularly scheduled public meeting, to post it in such places as the Board posts its public notices for a period of no less than thirty (30) days, and to publish it online on the District's website, if available, for no less than thirty (30) days; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Board shall provide the Commission with the minutes, once adopted, from the meeting at which it reads the within Resolution.



Robert W. Bender, Chairperson
School Ethics Commission

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the School Ethics Commission at its meeting on January 27, 2026.



Brigid C. Martens, Director
School Ethics Commission