

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



**Office of Government Ethics**

In Re: M. Stinson  
Case No. 25-0008-F

**NEGOTIATED DISPOSITION**

Pursuant to section 221 (a)(4)(E)<sup>1</sup> of the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability Establishment and Comprehensive Ethics Reform Amendment Act of 2011, effective April 27, 2012, D.C. Law 19-124, D.C. Code § 1-1161.01 et seq., (“Ethics Act”), the Office of Government Ethics (the “Office” or “OGE”) hereby enters into this public negotiated settlement agreement with the Respondent, M. Stinson. Respondent agrees that the resulting disposition is a settlement of the above-titled action, detailed as follows:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Respondent was employed with District of Columbia Public Schools (“DCPS”) from August 1, 2010 to June 20, 2025. She most recently served as an Instructional Superintendent. Respondent's duties consisted of managing the principals of DCPS Cluster II. This included managing the professional development of the principals and administrative duties such as approving procurement requests in PASS.

On May 17, 2017, when she was the Principal of Truesdell Elementary School, Respondent received a welcome email from the Human Resources Department of Relay Graduate School of Education (“Relay”)<sup>2</sup>. The email contained a consulting agreement which outlined the Respondent’s role with Relay as an independent contractor. Respondent would be paid up to \$10,000 for a year of consulting services under that initial contract. In May 2017, Relay became a contractor with the District of Columbia. According to Relay payment records, Respondent earned \$169,464.82 in consulting fees from Relay between July 1, 2018, and July 30, 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 221(a)(4)(E) of the Ethics Act provides, “[i]n addition to any civil penalty imposed under this title, a violation of the Code of Conduct may result in the following: . . . [a] negotiated disposition of a matter offered by the Director of Government Ethics, and accepted by the respondent, subject to approval by the Ethics Board.”

<sup>2</sup> Relay is an accredited not-for-profit institution of higher education serving 4,000 teachers and 1,200 school leaders across the U.S and offers degree programs, professional development, and unique learning experiences for teachers, principals, college students, and members of the public.

On June 21, 2023, Respondent attended Triathlon Coaching sessions on behalf of Relay. She attended from 8 am to noon but entered eight (8) hours of regular pay on her District government timesheet. On July 25, 2023, Respondent attended a July Triathlon Wave 1 meeting on behalf of Relay from 8 am to 10 am but entered eight (8) hours of regular pay on her District government timesheet. Respondent attended the 2024 Relay Graduate School of Education Instructional Leadership Academy Intersession 9 in Charlotte, N.C. from February 14th through February 15th, 2024. Respondent attended this event on behalf of Relay. Her flight left in the evening on February 14th. Respondent entered eight (8) hours of sick leave on her District government timesheet for February 15, 2024.

In an interview with OGE staff, Respondent admitted to meeting with Relay weekly in her official capacity as a DCPS Instructional Superintendent while maintaining an outside financial relationship with the entity. Respondent further admitted that on May 11, 2023, she received an email at her DCPS email address from a Relay representative, who suggested that a specific school continue its working relationship with Relay. Respondent subsequently met with the principal of the school to review the school's budget and ascertain whether the school could continue working with Relay. Respondent subsequently emailed a Relay representative and confirmed that the principal had agreed to fund a working relationship between her school and Relay in the amount of \$30,000. The Relay representative responded and thanked Respondent and her team for "making this happen".<sup>3</sup> According to Respondent, Instructional Superintendents are required to review budgets with principals.

On February 20, 2024, Respondent sent an email to a listserv called "Cluster 2 Principals" with information regarding Relay training and pricing; during this time Respondent was still associated with Relay as a contractor. According to Respondent, she did not draft this email but forwarded it after she received it from DCPS senior leadership.

Respondent became a Financial Disclosure Statement ("FDS") filer<sup>4</sup> in 2017 and was, at that point, required to report any outside activity she engaged in during the previous calendar year and the amount she earned from the outside activity. Respondent was designated as an FDS filer again in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. In 2019, Respondent was promoted to Instructional Superintendent with DCPS. On her 2022 FDS, within which she was required to disclose outside income from 2021, Respondent reported earnings between \$1,001 and \$15,000 from Relay. However, according to Relay payment records, Respondent earned \$59,824.95 as a Relay consultant in 2021. On her 2023 FDS, within which she was required to disclose outside income from 2022, Respondent reported earnings between \$1,001 and \$15,000 from Relay. However, according to Relay payment records, Respondent earned \$47,834.51 as a Relay consultant in 2022.

On at least 20 occasions, Respondent used her District government email account to correspond

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<sup>3</sup> Email dated May 11, 2023, at 12:08 pm, title "Subject: RE: Coaching next year..."

<sup>4</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 1-1161.01(47)(I), (A District of Columbia [ ] employee, except an employee of the Council, paid at a rate of Excepted Service 9 or above, or its equivalent, who makes decisions or participates substantially in areas of contracting, procurement, administration of grants or subsidies, developing policies, land use planning, inspecting, licensing, regulating, or auditing, or acts in areas of responsibility that may create a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest...).

regarding outside business matters, including sending and receiving consulting agreements, contracts and other documents to and from Relay that pertained to her outside employment with the entity and negotiating for employment with potential employers in North Carolina.

#### NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Respondent violated the following provisions of the District Personnel Manual (“DPM”) and District of Columbia Code (“D.C. Official Code”):

- ❖ **Count One:** Using her official position or title, or personally and substantially participat[ing], through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or otherwise, in a judicial or other proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, charge, accusation, arrest, or other particular matter, or attempting to influence the outcome of a particular matter, in a manner that the employee knows is likely to have a direct and predictable effect on the employee’s financial interests or the financial interests of a person closely affiliated with the employee in violation of D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.23(a).
  - Respondent violated this rule when she influenced a principal, who was her subordinate, to fund business between the principal’s school and Relay while simultaneously maintaining a financial relationship with Relay.
- ❖ **Count Two:** Failing to file a full and complete report pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.24(a)(1).
  - Respondent violated this rule when she misrepresented the amount range of her earnings from Relay in 2021 and 2022.
- ❖ **Count Three:** Using government time or resources for other than official business, or government approved or sponsored activities, in violation of DPM § 1807.1(b).
  - Respondent violated this rule when, on at least three occasions, she either reported to the District that she had worked a full day for the District or that she or her immediate family member was ill, when she was, for some portion of the period she reported, working for and earning money from Relay, who contracted with her agency.
- ❖ **Count Four:** Using government time or resources for other than official business, or government approved or sponsored activities, in violation of DPM § 1808.
  - Respondent violated this rule when, on more than 20 occasions, she used her District government email for personal matters, which were not authorized by the District, including sending and receiving correspondence regarding her outside consulting business with Relay, who contracted with her agency.

None of the above-referenced conduct was authorized by the District of Columbia.

## TERMS OF THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

Respondent acknowledges that her conduct was a serious violation of the Code of Conduct. Respondent agrees to pay a fine in the amount of **FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS** (\$15,000.00), as outlined below. Additionally, Respondent agrees not to engage in such conduct in the future.

1. Respondent agrees to make a lump sum payment of \$5,000 on or before November 3, 2025. Payment will be accepted by certified check or money order, made out to the D.C. Treasurer, delivered to and received by OGE at 1030 15th Street NW, Suite 700 West, Washington, DC 20005 or by electronic payment at <https://dcwebforms.dc.gov/pay/bega1/> using transaction ID 25-0008-F;
2. Respondent agrees to make monthly payments in the amount of **\$833.00**, via online payment at <https://dcwebforms.dc.gov/pay/bega1/> using transaction ID 25-0008-F beginning on December 3, 2025, and continuing until the entire fine amount is fully satisfied.
3. Respondent agrees to satisfy the entire fine amount by November 3, 2026 (the "Maturity Date").

In consideration of Respondent's acknowledgement and agreement, OGE will seek no further remedy and will take no further action related to the above misconduct. By agreeing to settle this matter via a negotiated disposition, Respondent will allow OGE to avoid expending significant time and resources to litigate this matter through a contested hearing, and to focus its finite resources on other investigations.

Respondent also understands that if she fails to pay the \$15,000.00 fine in the manner and within the time limit provided above, pursuant to section 221(a)(5)(A) of the Ethics Act (D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.21(a)(5)(A)), the Ethics Board may file a petition in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for enforcement of this Negotiated Disposition and the accompanying Board Order assessing the fine. Respondent agrees that this Negotiated Disposition is not just an admission of wrongdoing but constitutes various factual admissions that may be used in any subsequent enforcement or judicial proceeding that may result from failure to comply with this agreement.

Respondent knowingly and willingly waives the right to appeal the accompanying Board Order imposing a fine in this matter in exchange for the concessions made by this Office in this Negotiated Disposition. Respondent further understands that failure to adhere to this agreement, OGE may instead, at its sole option, send any unpaid fine amount to collections or recommend that the Ethics Board nullify this settlement and hold an open and adversarial hearing on this matter, after which the Ethics Board may impose sanctions up to the full statutory amount (\$5,000.00 per violation) as provided in the Ethics Act for each violation.<sup>5</sup> Because OGE is, at this time, foregoing requesting that the Ethics Board hold an open and adversarial hearing on this matter, Respondent waives any statute of limitation defenses should the Ethics Board decide to

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<sup>5</sup> Section 221(a)(1) (D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.21(a)(1)).

proceed in that matter as a result of Respondent's breach of this agreement.

The mutual promises outlined herein constitute the entire agreement in this case. Failure by the Respondent to adhere to any provision of this agreement is a breach rendering the entire agreement voidable at the Board's discretion. By our signatures, we agree to the terms outlined above.

<div style="background-color: black; width: 150px; height: 25px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><span>M <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em; display: inline-block;"></div> Stinson</span><span>9/29/2025</span></div> <div>Respondent</div>	<hr/> <div>Date</div>
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<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Ashley Cooks</i></div> <hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><span>Ashley D. Cooks</span><span>9/30/2024</span></div> <div>Director of Government Ethics</div>	<hr/> <div>Date</div>
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This agreement shall not be deemed effective unless and until it is approved by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability, as demonstrated by the signature of the Chairperson below.

APPROVED:

<div style="text-align: center;"></div> <hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><span>Norma Hutcheson</span><span>10-2-25</span></div> <div>Chairperson, Board of Ethics and Government Accountability</div>	<hr/> <div>Date</div>
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AC/ASM

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



Office of Government Ethics

IN RE: M [REDACTED] Stinson  
Respondent

CASE No.: 25-0008-F

**ORDER**

Based upon the mutual representations and promises contained in the Negotiated Disposition approved by the Board herein on October 2, 2025, and upon the entire record in this case; it is, therefore

ORDERED that Respondent pay a civil penalty in the amount of **FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS** (\$15,000.00).

This Order is effective upon approval by the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability, as demonstrated by the signature of the Chairperson below.

*Norma B. Hutcheson* \_\_\_\_\_

**Norma Hutcheson**  
Chairperson, Board of Ethics and Government  
Accountability

10-2-25

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**