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THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BEFORE
THE OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE APPEALS

In the Matter of:)	
)	
GARY STANLEY,)	
Employee)	OEA Matter No. 1601-0149-11
)	
v.)	Date of Issuance: June 21, 2013
)	
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA)	STEPHANIE N. HARRIS, Esq.
PUBLIC SCHOOLS,)	Administrative Judge
Agency)	
)	
Gary Stanley, Employee <i>Pro-Se</i>		
Carl Turpin, Esq., Agency Representative		

INITIAL DECISION

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On July 28, 2011, Gary Stanley (“Employee”) filed a Petition for Appeal with the Office of Employee Appeals (“OEA” or “Office”) contesting the District of Columbia Public Schools’ (“Agency” or “DCPS”) decision to terminate him.¹ On September 12, 2011, Agency submitted its Answer to Employee’s Petition for Appeal.

I was assigned this matter on or around March 29, 2013. On May 20, 2013, the undersigned issued an Order (“May 20th Order”) scheduling a Prehearing Conference for June 4, 2013. Agency was present for the Prehearing Conference, but Employee did not appear at the scheduled date and time. Subsequently, the undersigned issued an Order for Statement of Good Cause on June 4, 2013 (“June 4th Order”). Employee was ordered to submit a statement of Good Cause based on his failure to appear at the scheduled Prehearing Conference. Employee’s response to the June 4th Order was due on or before June 14, 2013. As of the date of this decision, OEA has not received a response from Employee regarding the aforementioned Order for Statement of Good Cause. Based on the record to date, I have determined that no further proceedings are warranted. The record is now closed.

¹ Employee was terminated after receiving a “Minimally Effective” rating under the D.C. Public Schools’ Effectiveness Assessment System for School-Based Personnel (“IMPACT”) for school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

JURISDICTION

The Office has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 1-606.03.

ISSUE

Whether this appeal should be dismissed.

BURDEN OF PROOF

OEA Rule 628.1, 59 DCR 2129 (March 16, 2012) states:

The burden of proof with regard to material issues of fact shall be by a preponderance of the evidence. “Preponderance of the evidence” shall mean:

That degree of relevant evidence which a reasonable mind, considering the record as a whole, would accept as sufficient to find a contested fact more probably true than untrue.

OEA Rule 628.2 *id.* states:

The employee shall have the burden of proof as to issues of jurisdiction, including timeliness of filing. The agency shall have the burden of proof as to all other issues.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

OEA Rule 621.1² grants an Administrative Judge (“AJ”) the authority to impose sanctions upon the parties as necessary to serve the ends of justice. The AJ “in the exercise of sound discretion may dismiss the action or rule for the appellant” if a party fails to take reasonable steps to prosecute or defend an appeal.³ Additionally, OEA Rule 621.3(a)-(b), states that failure to prosecute an appeal includes, but is not limited to, a failure to:

- (a) Appear at a scheduled proceeding after receiving notice; or
- (b) Submit required documents after being provided with a deadline for such submission.

Moreover, this Office has consistently held that a matter may be dismissed for failure to prosecute when a party fails to appear at a scheduled proceeding or fails to submit required

² 59 DCR 2129 (March 16, 2012).

³ *See* OEA Rule 621.3.

documents.⁴ Employee did not appear at the scheduled Prehearing Conference and he failed to submit a response to the June 4th Order for Statement of Good Cause. Employee's appearance at the scheduled Prehearing Conference was necessary to address pertinent issues in this matter and was required for a proper resolution of this matter on its merits. Further, both the May 20th and June 4th Orders advised Employee that failure to comply could result in sanctions, including dismissal. The undersigned concludes that Employee's failure to prosecute his appeal is a violation of OEA Rule 621. Employee has not exercised the diligence expected of an appellant pursuing an appeal before this Office. Accordingly, this matter should be dismissed for Employee's failure to prosecute his appeal.

ORDER

It is hereby **ORDERED** that the petition in this matter is dismissed for Employee's failure to prosecute his appeal.

FOR THE OFFICE:

STEPHANIE N. HARRIS, Esq.
Administrative Judge

⁴ See also *Employee v. Agency*, OEA Matter No. 1602-0078-83, 32 D.C. Reg. 1244 (1985); *Williams v. D.C. Public Schools*, OEA Matter No. 2401-0244-09 (December 13, 2010); *Brady v. Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization*, OEA Matter No. 2401-0219-09 (November 1, 2010).