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**THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**BEFORE**

**THE OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE APPEALS**

_____	)	
In the Matter of:	)	
	)	OEA Matter No.: 1601-0231-12
ZAKIA HAIGHT,	)	
Employee	)	
	)	Date of Issuance: December 31, 2013
v.	)	
	)	
D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS,	)	
Agency	)	Sommer J. Murphy, Esq.
_____	)	Administrative Judge
Zakia Haight, Employee	)	
Carl Turpin, Esq., Agency Representative	)	

**INITIAL DECISION**

**INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On August 31, 2012, Zakia Haight (“Employee”) filed a Petition for Appeal with the Office of Employee Appeals (“OEA”) contesting the District of Columbia Public Schools’ (“Agency” or “DCPS”) action of terminating her employment. The effective date of Employee’s termination was September 4, 2012. Employee’s position of record at the time she was terminated was a teacher at West Educational Campus.

I was assigned this matter in November of 2013. On November 25, 2013, I issued an Order convening a Prehearing Conference to be held at this Office on December 19, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. Agency appeared for the conference; however, Employee did not. I subsequently issued an Order for Statement of Good Cause to Employee on December 20, 2013 because she failed to appear for the Prehearing Conference. Employee was required to submit a statement to establish cause for her failure to appear on or before December 26, 2013. Employee has failed to submit a statement of good cause as of the date of this Initial Decision. The record is now closed.

**JURISDICTION**

This Office has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to D.C. Official Code §1-606.03 (2001).

ISSUE

Whether Employee's appeal should be dismissed for failure to prosecute.

FINDINGS OF FACT, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

OEA Rule 621.3 further provides that "if a party fails to take reasonable steps to prosecute or defend an appeal, the Administrative Judge, in the exercise of sound discretion, may dismiss the action or rule for the appellant." Failure of a party to prosecute an appeal includes, but is not limited to.

- (a) Appear at a scheduled proceeding after receiving notice;
- (b) Submit required documents after being provided with a deadline for such submission; or
- (c) Inform this Office of a change of address which results in correspondence being returned.

In this case, Employee was warned that the failure to appear could result in sanctions as enumerated in Rule 621.3. Employee did not appear for the December 19, 2013 Prehearing Conference. Employee also failed to provide a Statement of Good Cause on or before December 26, 2013 to explain her failure to appear. Based on the foregoing, I find that Employee's lack of diligence in pursuing an appeal before OEA constitutes a failure to prosecute and serves grounds for the dismissal of this matter.

ORDER

It is hereby ORDERED that Employee's Petition for Appeal is DISMISSED for failure to prosecute.

FOR THE OFFICE:

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SOMMER J. MURPHY, ESQ.  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE