

YARONDA T. MCDONALD,	§	BEFORE THE
Petitioner,	§	
	§	
v.	§	COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
	§	
KIPP TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS,	§	
Respondent.	§	THE STATE OF TEXAS

DECISION OF THE COMMISSIONER

Petitioner Yaronda McDonald, a former employee of Respondent Kipp Texas Public Schools, an open-enrollment charter school, appeals to the Commissioner of Education challenging Respondent’s March 3, 2026 termination of her employment contract. Petitioner asserts that Respondent conducted a biased investigation before terminating her contract. She asks the Commissioner to order her reinstatement; “exonerate” her of violations of the Educator’s Code of Ethics; order compensatory damages for emotional distress, defamation, and reputational harm; and order Respondent to retract its report of misconduct to the Texas Education Agency.

Adrienne Butcher is the Administrative Law Judge assigned to hear this case. Petitioner proceeds *pro se*. Respondent has not appeared in this matter.

Because Petitioner fails to establish the Commissioner’s jurisdiction and cannot cure this defect, as Respondent is an open-enrollment charter school not subject to the procedures set out in Texas Education Code Chapter 21, this appeal is dismissed without a merits hearing. *See* 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 157.1056(a).

FINDINGS OF FACT

After due consideration of the record and matters officially noticed, it is concluded that the following Findings of Fact are established by the record and file in this case:

1. Respondent is an open-enrollment charter school operating in Texas.
2. Respondent employed Petitioner as a teacher during the 2025–2026 school year.
3. Respondent terminated Petitioner’s employment contract on March 3, 2026.
4. Petitioner appealed to the Commissioner on March 9, 2026.

5. The Administrative Law Judge reviewed the pleadings and issued a March 9, 2026 Notice of Intent to Dismiss Appeal for Lack of Jurisdiction, giving Petitioner an opportunity to file a written response on or before March 13, 2026. Petitioner did not file a written response.

6. Respondent has not yet appeared in this case.

DISCUSSION

The Commissioner's jurisdiction

The Commissioner has limited appellate jurisdiction, granted by the Legislature, to hear appeals of certain school board actions and decisions. Because this appeal complains of employment termination, the Agency docketed it as an appeal arising under Texas Education Code Chapter 21, Subchapter G. However, Respondent is an open-enrollment charter school and, as such, is except from the school laws of this state that apply to Texas independent school districts, except where the school law specifically includes open-enrollment charter schools or is included on the statutory list of school laws applicable to charter schools, found in Texas Education Code Chapter 12. *See Sharp v. Golden Rule Schs., Inc.*, No. 013-R10-11-2020 (Comm'r Educ. 2021) (finding no jurisdiction over appeal by charter school's at-will employee whose employment was terminated); *see also* Tex. Educ. Code § 12.104 (listing Texas school laws that apply to open-enrollment charter schools).

Because Respondent is an open-enrollment charter school, the Commissioner lacks jurisdiction over Petitioner's appeal, as Subchapter G does not mention charter schools, and Chapter 21 is not included in the Texas school laws that apply to open-enrollment charter schools. *See Bolton v. Student Alts. Program., Inc. d/b/a Triumph Pub. Schs.—Lubbock*, No. 028-R2-01-2020 (Comm'r Educ. 2020); *see also* Tex. Educ. Code §§ 12.104, 21.301.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, Petitioner's appeal is dismissed without a merits hearing for lack of jurisdiction. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 157.1056(a).

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

After due consideration of the record, matters officially noticed, and the foregoing Findings of Fact, in my capacity as Administrative Law Judge, I make the following Conclusions of Law:

1. The Commissioner lacks jurisdiction over this appeal. *See* Tex. Educ. Code § 21.301.
2. The procedures in Texas Education Code Chapter 21, Subchapter G do not apply to open-enrollment charter schools. *See* Tex. Educ. Code § 12.104; *id.* Ch. 21; *Bolton v. Student Alts. Program, Inc. d/b/a Triumph Pub. Schs.—Lubbock*, No. 028-R2-01-2020 (Comm’r Educ. 2020).
3. Petitioner’s appeal is dismissed without a merits hearing for lack of jurisdiction. *See* 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 157.1056(a).

ORDER

After due consideration of the record, matters officially noticed and the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, in my capacity as Commissioner of Education, it is hereby ORDERED that the Petitioner’s appeal be, and is hereby, DISMISSED.

SIGNED AND ISSUED this 19th day of March 2026.



MIKE MORATH
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION