

**BEFORE THE  
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

DENISE M. CARLIN, Ed.D.,  
Petitioner,

v.

CASE NO: 25-26-001

NURIA ACUNA,  
Respondent.

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**PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

**COMES NOW** DR. DENISE M. CARLIN, Superintendent of Lee County School District (the “**Superintendent**”), and hereby files this Petition for Termination of Employment with the SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA (the “**Board**”) pursuant to Board Policy 3145 against Nuria Acuna (the “**Employee**”).

**Notice Of Hearing Before the School Board**

A hearing before the School Board will be held for this petition at the Lee County Public Education Center, in the Board Room, 2855 Colonial Boulevard, Fort Myers, Florida, on the 4th day of November 2025, at 11 a.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard.

**Charges**

The Employee has been charged with:

“*Misconduct*” based upon violations of Board Policy 3210.01 – Ethics in Education.

“*Misconduct*” based upon violations of Board Policy 3210 – Standards of Ethical Conduct for Instructional Staff.

“*Misconduct*” based upon violations of Board Policy 3139 – Educator Misconduct.

“*Misconduct*” based upon violations of Rule 6A-5.056(2), Florida Administrative Code.

### **Findings of Fact**

There is just cause for the Charges based upon the following findings of fact:

1. On February 13, 2025, the Employee reported to work under the influence. Based on reasonable suspicion, a multi-drug saliva test of the Employee was performed. The test resulted in a positive result for cocaine.
2. While investigating the foregoing, Professional Standards interviewed several of the Employee's students. Each of the students was of high school age.
3. Multiple students advised the investigator that the Employee vaped in class and permitted students to vape in class.
4. It was also reported that the Employee shared her personal vaping device with students in class and sold drinks and chips to students from her room.
5. On August 14, 2025, the Employee attended a pre-determination conference with her union representative to provide her side of the story.
6. Following the pre-determination hearing, it was determined that a recommendation would be made to the Superintendent to terminate the Employee's employment with the District.

**See Exhibit 1.**

7. The Superintendent supports that recommendation.

### **Notice of Right to Hearing**

8. The Employee is hereby notified of the option to request a hearing regarding the Charges within twenty-one (21) calendar days after receipt of this petition.
9. The Employee shall be entitled to representation, as applicable, should a hearing be timely requested.
10. The Employee acknowledges that failure to request a hearing on the Charges timely shall constitute an admission of the same and waiver of the right to a hearing.

**Recommendation of Superintendent**


**WHEREAS**, pursuant to School Board Policy 3145, if the Employee requests a DOAH hearing, the Superintendent respectfully recommends that the Board suspend the employee without pay and benefits pending the outcome of the DOAH Hearing. If the Employee fails to request a DOAH hearing, the Superintendent recommends terminating the Employee's employment effective November 4, 2025.



**Denise M. Carlin, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

Date: 9/10/25

*Approved as to form for the reliance  
of Lee County School District:*

By:   
Office of Legal Services



# The School District of Lee County

Michael K. Harris, MEd, Assistant Director, Professional Standards

2855 Colonial Boulevard, Fort Myers, FL 33966

O: 239.337.8255 | F: 239.335.1507

August 28, 2025

**SENT VIA CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT  
AND RETURN RECEIPT EMAIL**

Nuria Acuna

[NuriaMA@leeschools.net](mailto:NuriaMA@leeschools.net) / [nmacuna87@yahoo.com](mailto:nmacuna87@yahoo.com)

1717 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Cape Coral, FL 33991

Dear Ms. Acuna:

As you are aware, the School District of Lee County initiated an investigation into allegations of misconduct against you. A Predetermination hearing was held on Thursday, August 14, 2025, to give you the opportunity to respond. You were present at the hearing in addition to: myself, Robert Dodig, Assistant School Board Attorney, II, Dr. Justin Helm, Coordinator, Professional Standards and Dr. Kerr Fazzone, Service Unit Director, FEA/TALC.

Please be advised that the investigation has concluded at this time and the District finds there is just cause for disciplinary action. As a result, we will be recommending to the Superintendent that you be terminated from your position at the next appropriate School Board meeting. Pursuant to School Board Policy 4145 you are hereby suspended without pay effective August 29, 2025.

This letter will be open to public inspection and/or copying pursuant to Chapters 119 and 1012, Florida Statutes, within 10 days of your receipt of the same. A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file. Any other documents shall be maintained as required by law. Please be advised that you have the right to answer these materials in writing and that this answer will be attached to the documents in the personnel file.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Harris, M.Ed., Assistant Director  
Professional Standards

cc: Ronald Iarussi, EdD, Senior Director, Labor Relations  
Robert Dodig, Assistant School Board Attorney II  
Dr. Kerr Fazzone, Service Unit Director, FEA/TALC  
Dr. Michelle Cort, Principal, Island Coast High School  
Personnel File  
Insurance and Benefits  
Payroll Department  
Investigation File

Board Members: Samuel Fisher, District 1, Chair | Jada Langford Fleming, District 6, Vice Chair  
Melisa W. Giovannelli, District 2 | William F. Ribble, Jr., District 3 | Debbie Jordan, District 4 | Armor Persons, District 5  
Vanessa M. Chaviano, District 7 | Denise M. Carlin, Ed.D., Superintendent | Kathy Dupuy-Bruno, Esq. B.C.S., Board Attorney