

An unpublished opinion of the North Carolina Court of Appeals does not constitute controlling legal authority. Citation is disfavored, but may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of Rule 30(e)(3) of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure.

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. COA25-365

Filed 17 September 2025

Stokes County, No. 23JT000055-840

IN THE MATTER OF:

S.T.S.,

A minor juvenile.

Appeal by respondent-mother from order entered 19 December 2024 by Judge Marion M. Boone in Stokes County District Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 14 August 2025.

*Robinson & Lawing, LLP, by Christopher M. Watford for respondent-appellant mother.*

*James N. Freeman, Jr., for Guardian ad Litem.*

*Jennifer Oakley Michaud, for Stokes County Department of Social Services, petitioner-appellee.*

PER CURIAM.

Respondent-appellant (“Mother”) appeals from the termination of parental rights (“TPR”) order. Mother’s counsel has filed a no-merit brief under Rule 3.1(e) of

our Rules of Appellate Procedure. Under Rule 3.1(e), counsel filing a no-merit brief is required to “identify any issues in the record on appeal that arguably support the appeal and must state why those issues lack merit or would not alter the ultimate result.” N.C. R. App. P. 3.1(e) (2023).

Here, counsel for Mother has fully complied with all the requirements of Rule 3.1(e) and identified five issues for our independent review. This Court conducts an independent review of the issues raised in the no-merit brief. *In re L.E.M.*, 372 N.C. 396, 402 (2019). “[T]he text of Rule 3.1([e]) plainly contemplates appellate review of the issues contained in a no-merit brief.” *Id.*

We have reviewed the issues raised by Mother’s counsel and “are satisfied that the trial court's order terminating [Mother’s] parental rights is supported by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence and is based on proper legal grounds.” *In re K.M.S.*, 380 N.C. 56, 59 (2022). Accordingly, we affirm the trial court’s order.

AFFIRMED.

Panel consisting of Chief Judge DILLON and Judges ARROWOOD and GRIFFIN.

Report per Rule 30(e).