

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
or Revocation of the)
)
Educator Certificate of)
)
George Scott Harmon)
)
Certificate 167200)
_____)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 13, 2011. On July 7, 2011, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent George Scott Harmon a notice of his right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate 167200 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Mr. Harmon received the notice on July 9, 2011, as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. On July 13, 2011, Mr. Harmon's attorney requested a hearing.

Prior to the hearing, Mr. Harmon's attorney advised the SCDE that Mr. Harmon had agreed to waive his right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into a Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the terms stated herein. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

Accepted
<i>SSH</i>
Initial
10-4-11
Date
George S. Harmon 167200

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Harmon holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over eighteen years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Since 2001, Mr. Harmon had been employed by Lexington-Richland School District Five (District) as a special education teacher and varsity wrestling coach at Chapin High School, until he resigned from the District effective October 20, 2010, following an investigation into allegations that Mr. Harmon had been reported to have taken money for his own personal use from a school athletic account. Mr. Harmon stated that he withdrew the funds to compensate himself for financial

supplements he felt he was owed as a result of coaching agreements from 2007 through 2009. Mr. Harmon was cooperative, apologetic, and remorseful for his actions. He repaid the District the amount of \$3,432.15. Law enforcement completed its investigation into the matter and determined to take no action.

On July 7, 2011, the SCDE sent Mr. Harmon a notice of his right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate 167200 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Mr. Harmon received the notice on June 9, 2011, as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. On July 13, 2011, Mr. Harmon's attorney informed the SCDE that Mr. Harmon requested a hearing in this matter.

Prior to the hearing, Mr. Harmon's attorney advised the SCDE that Mr. Harmon had agreed to waive his right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into a Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to all school districts in South Carolina with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct," and (3) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

Mr. Harmon and his attorney have cooperated with SCDE. Mr. Harmon acknowledges that he has engaged in unprofessional conduct by improperly taking money from a school athletic account. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2010). The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of George Scott Harmon; however the evidence presented

Accepted

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demonstrates that Mr. Harmon engaged in unprofessional conduct by improperly taking money from a school athletic account and that just cause does exist for the issuance of a Public Reprimand by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to George Scott Harmon, certificate 167200. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to all school districts in South Carolina with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's web site and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Gerrita Postlewait, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
October 13, 2011

I, George Scott Harmon, SC Educator Certificate 167200, do hereby agree to the proposed Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on Thursday, October 13, 2011.


George Scott Harmon

10-4-11
Date