

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation	)	
	)	
Or Suspension of the	)	ORDER OF
	)	
Educator Certificate of	)	SUSPENSION
	)	
Shandra R. Johnson	)	
	)	
<u>Certificate 209558</u>	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 8, 2012. On December 21, 2011, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Ms. Shandra R. Johnson of the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate by first class and certified mail, return receipt requested to Ms. Johnson's address on record. Ms. Johnson was personally served by the Florence County Sheriff's Office on April 18, 2012. Ms. Johnson did not request a hearing within the time specified in the notice and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Johnson's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on August 8, 2012, and ending on August 7, 2014.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Johnson holds a professional educator certificate and has approximately ten years of teaching experience. Ms. Johnson held employment with the Florence County School District One (District) as a fifth grade teacher at Moore Intermediate School (School) and the Association of Parents and Teachers (APTS) bookkeeper at Savannah Grove Elementary School. On July 12, 2011, Ms. Johnson resigned in lieu of termination from the District following a District investigation into allegations of Ms. Johnson's involvement with embezzlement and breach of trust with respect to the school APTS funds. The District learned that APTS funds were unaccounted for and confronted Ms. Johnson. Ms. Johnson agreed to pay restitution for the unaccounted for funds. Subsequently, the District discovered that Ms. Johnson used the APTS money to pay for her personal cell phone. Ms. Johnson refunded the District the amount of \$4,282.06. Although the District referred this matter to the Florence County Sheriff's Office the case was dismissed because Ms. Johnson paid complete restitution to the District.

On December 21, 2011, the SCDE sent notice to Ms. Shandra R. Johnson of the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate by first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Ms. Johnson's address on record. On January 10, 2012, the certified notice letter was returned, marked unclaimed. On January 31, 2012, the SCDE sent a second notice

letter to the new address. On February 16, 2012, the certified notice letter was returned, marked unclaimed. On March 14, 2012, the SCDE verified the second address as valid.

On March 27, 2012, the SCDE sent a third notice letter to the Florence County Sheriff's Office to have Ms. Johnson personally served. The Florence County Sheriff's Office personally served Ms. Johnson with notice on April 18, 2012. Ms. Johnson did not request a hearing within the time specified in the notice and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Johnson's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on August 8, 2012, and ending on August 7, 2014.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), and 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), 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, and any conduct which evidences unfitness for teaching. S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2011). The State Board finds that Ms. Johnson engaged in unprofessional conduct, dishonesty and demonstrated unfitness for teaching as a result of her embezzlement of APTS funds from the District. The State Board further finds that the information presented by the SCDE supports its determination that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Johnson's educator certificate 209558 for a period of two years, beginning August 8, 2012, and ending August 7, 2014.

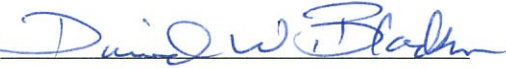
The State Board now therefore orders the suspension of the educator certificate of Shandra R. Johnson, certificate 209558, for a period of two years. The suspension of Ms. Johnson's educator certificate 209558 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order with the reason stated as "unprofessional conduct and evident unfitness for position for which employed."

If Ms. Johnson wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Certification, Recruitment and Preparation. Ms. Johnson will be responsible for meeting all current certification requirements at the time she requests certification and shall be responsible for the payment of a reinstatement fee.

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 

David Blackmon, PhD, Chair-Elect

Columbia, South Carolina
August 8, 2012