

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

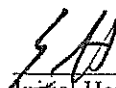
In the Matter of the Voluntary)
Surrender of the Educator)
Certificate of Eric Thomas Helms)
Certificate 248841)

CONSENT ORDER OF
PERMANENT VOLUNTARY
SURRENDER

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 11, 2013. On April 2, 2013, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), § 59-5-10 (2004), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Eric Thomas Helms, certificate 248841, as a result of his being arrested on March 29, 2013, in Charleston, South Carolina, and being charged with one count of Sexual Battery of a Student. The SCDE sent notice to Mr. Helms on April 8, 2013. Mr. Helms received the notice as evidenced by a signed postal receipt bearing his signature. On April 19, 2013, Mr. Helms' legal counsel contacted the SCDE and requested a hearing. Prior to scheduling the hearing, legal counsel for Mr. Helms informed the SCDE that Mr. Helms desired to waive his right to a hearing and to enter into a Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender of his educator certificate 248841, effective September 11, 2013.

Eric
Thomas
Helms
248841


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Date

FINDINGS OF FACT

The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004).

Mr. Helms holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has one year of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Helms was employed by the Charleston County School District (District) as a social studies teacher at West Ashley High School (School). On April 8, 2013, Mr. Helms resigned from his position with the District.

On March 29, 2013, Mr. Helms was arrested in Charleston, South Carolina, and charged with one count of Sexual Battery with a Student, following an investigation into

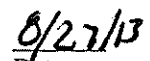
allegations that Mr. Helms, while employed as a teacher at the School, was involved in a relationship with an eighteen year old student who was a student at the school. The student was Mr. Helms' teaching assistant in his classroom and Mr. Helms had direct supervisory authority over the student.

On April 2, 2013, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), § 59-5-10 (2004), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the SCDE requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend Mr. Helms' educator certificate as a result of his arrested on March 29, 2013. The SCDE sent notice to Mr. Helms on April 8, 2013. Mr. Helms received the notice as evidenced by a signed postal receipt bearing his signature. On April 19, 2013, Mr. Helms' legal counsel contacted the SCDE and requested a hearing. Prior to scheduling the hearing, legal counsel for Mr. Helms informed the SCDE that Mr. Helms desired to waive his right to a hearing and to enter into a Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender of his educator certificate 248841, effective September 11, 2013.

Mr. Helms agrees to the permanent surrender of his South Carolina educator certificate 248841 subject to the following conditions: (1) his educator certificate will become permanently invalid and permanently revoked immediately upon the approval by the State Board of the Consent Order of Voluntary Surrender; (2) he has waived his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review; and (3) he understands that the permanent surrender of his educator certificate will be reported to all school districts in South Carolina and the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as a permanent voluntary surrender and permanent revocation.

Eric
Thomas
Helms
248841


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Date

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, 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 and evident unfitness for position for which employed." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs 43-58 (Supp. 2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE demonstrates that Mr. Helms engaged in unprofessional conduct and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed as a result of his admission of his

inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a female student over whom he had direct supervisory control. The evidence presented supports the State Board's decision to accept the permanent voluntary surrender of educator certificate 248841, issued under the name of Eric Thomas Helms, and to permanently revoke and render permanently invalid Mr. Helms's educator certificate effective September 11, 2013.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender is accepted and the educator certificate of Eric Thomas Helms, certificate 248841, is hereby declared permanently invalid and permanently revoked. The permanent voluntary surrender and revocation of the educator certificate of Eric Thomas Helms, certificate 248841 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: David W. Blackmon
David W. Blackmon, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
September 11, 2013

I, Eric Thomas Helms, S.C. Educator Certificate 248841, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of education certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Agreement are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review; and I hereby freely, knowingly and voluntarily permanently surrender my educator certificate to the South Carolina State Board of Education. I hereby acknowledge that this permanent surrender shall have the same effect as a permanent revocation of my certificate. I knowingly forfeit and relinquish all right, title and privilege of holding myself out as and being able to practice as an educator in the public schools in the State of South Carolina. I agree that I will not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, band teacher, coach, or in any other position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education on September 11, 2013.

Eric Thomas Helms
Eric Thomas Helms

8/27/13
Date