

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension	)	
	)	
or Revocation of the	)	ORDER OF
	)	
Educator Certificate of	)	SUSPENSION
	)	
Shawn Dickerson	)	
	)	
Certificate 193112	)	
	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 13, 2014. On January 6, 2014, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Shawn Dickerson a notice of his right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate 193112 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Mr. Dickerson received the notice on January 8, 2014, as evidenced by postal verification. Mr. Dickerson did not request a hearing and stated he would like to return to teaching at the conclusion of the suspension period. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspended Mr. Dickerson' educator certificate for a period of one year commencing on August 13, 2014, and ending on August 12, 2015.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Dickerson holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over fifteen years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board or the Greenville County School District (District). Mr. Dickerson had been employed by the District since August 1998. Mr. Dickerson was a teacher at Wade Hampton High School until his resignation on January 14, 2013.

Mr. Dickerson's resignation followed an incident involving allegations that Mr. Dickerson had possession of alcohol on school property on January 4, 2013. A student reported to the Principal that he had observed Mr. Dickerson in the restroom drinking from a bottle that smelled like beer. The school cameras showed Mr. Dickerson walking

down the hall with two Coke bottles that were half full of liquid. Two coke bottles were found in that bathroom with alcohol residue.

On January 7, 2013, the Principal and Assistant Principal met with Mr. Dickerson to discuss the January 4, 2013, incident. Mr. Dickerson stated he had never drank alcohol during a class, but admitted that he had consumed alcohol before he left school on that day. On January 7, 2013, he arrived at school with Coke bottles in his possession that contained alcohol. The District then placed Mr. Dickerson on administrative leave with pay. On January 14, 2013, Mr. Dickerson resigned from the District for personal reasons.

The District reported this matter to SCDE on April 10, 2013. On June 4, 2013, the SCDE attempted to serve Mr. Dickerson with a notice of his right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate 193112 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. After several unsuccessful attempts to serve him with notice, Mr. Dickerson received notice on January 8, 2014, as evidenced by a signed postal receipt bearing his signature. Mr. Dickerson did not request a hearing within the time limit and is in default. Mr. Dickerson informed SCDE that he has been in rehab treatment and would like to return to teaching after the suspension period has ended.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004); 2 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented, which is undisputed by Mr. Dickerson, demonstrates that Mr. Dickerson engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of his possessing alcohol and consuming it on school grounds. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Shawn Dickerson on the grounds of unprofessional conduct for a period of one year commencing on August 13, 2014, and ending on August 12, 2015.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Shawn Dickerson, certificate 193112, is suspended for a period of one year commencing on

August 13, 2014, and ending on August 12, 2015. If Mr. Dickerson wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Certification. Mr. Dickerson must submit documentation that he has successfully completed rehabilitation treatment and that he is safe to return to the practice of teaching. He shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees.

The suspension of Mr. Dickerson' educator certificate 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: 
Barry F. Bolen, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 13, 2014