

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of) **CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION**
)
Santricee Lavette Copeland)
)
Certificate 261056)
_____)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on January 8, 2014. On December 3, 2013, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Ms. Santricee Lavette Copeland that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding disciplinary action of her South Carolina educator certificate and her right to a hearing in this matter. The SCDE sent the notice by certified and regular mail, return receipt requested. After receiving the notice, Ms. Copeland contacted the SCDE and informed the SCDE that she desired to pursue an alternative resolution to this matter. Ms. Copeland has agreed to the suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate to coincide with the suspension of her Georgia educator certificate. After reviewing the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension suspending Ms. Copeland's educator certificate 261056 for a period of two months, commencing on January 8, 2014, and ending on March 4, 2014, subject to the terms specified herein.

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FINDINGS OF FACT

The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004) and § 59-25-160 (2004). Ms. Copeland holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has nine years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Copeland has been employed as a Math teacher by the School District of Edgefield County (District) since August 2012. The District placed Ms. Copeland on administrative leave, effective November 22, 2013, after learning that Ms. Copeland's Georgia educator certificate was suspended on March

4, 2013, for a period of one year. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (Commission) sanctioned Ms. Copeland's educator certificate for violating the testing procedures when she indicated to certain students that the answer the students chose for a particular question was incorrect. The Georgia Office of State Administrative Hearings affirmed the Commission's decision.

The SCDE initiated a disciplinary action upon learning of the suspension of Ms. Copeland's educator certificate in Georgia based on reciprocity. On December 3, 2013, the SCDE sent notice to Ms. Copeland that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding disciplinary action of her South Carolina educator certificate and her right to a hearing in this matter. The SCDE sent the notice by certified and regular mail, return receipt requested. After receiving the notice, Ms. Copeland contacted the SCDE and informed the SCDE that she agreed to waive her right to a hearing and that she desired to pursue an alternative resolution to this matter. Ms. Copeland agrees to the Consent Order of Suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate 261056 commencing on January 8, 2014, and ending on March 4, 2014. Ms. Copeland acknowledges that she has waived his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth herein are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review.

After reviewing the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension suspending Ms. Copeland's educator certificate 261056 for a period of two months, commencing on January 8, 2014, and ending on March 4, 2014, subject to the terms specified herein.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes, *inter alia*, "unprofessional conduct and violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58.3 and 43-58.4 (2011). It is unlawful to coach examinees during testing or to alter or interfere with examinees' responses in any way. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-1-445 (1) (c) (2004). The State Board finds that the decision of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission sanctioning Ms. Copeland's Georgia educator certificate for violating testing procedures

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supports its conclusion to suspend Ms. Copeland's South Carolina educator certificate 261056, for a period of two months, beginning on January 8, 2014, and ending on March 4, 2014. During the period of suspension, Ms. Copeland shall not volunteer or be employed, in any capacity, in any South Carolina school district.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board accepts the Consent Order of Suspension and the educator certificate of Santrice Lavette Copeland, certificate 261056, is hereby suspended. The suspension of Ms. Copeland's educator certificate will be reported to all school districts in South Carolina and the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as a two month suspension, commencing January 8, 2014, and ending on March 4, 2014.

If Ms. Copeland wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she must make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Copeland agrees that she shall be responsible for meeting all current certification requirements and that she shall also be responsible for paying a reinstatement fee.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 

Barry F. Bolen, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

January 8, 2014

I, Santrice Lavette Copeland, S.C. Educator Certificate 261056, understand that 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 hereby freely, knowingly and voluntarily enter into this Consent Order of Suspension. I agree that during the suspension period, I will not serve as a volunteer or be employed in any capacity, as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, coach, or in any other position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I agree to the terms of the Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board of Education on January 8, 2014.


Santrice Lavette Copeland

12/30/13
Date