

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Rodney Dwight Watters,)
Certificate 259585)
_____)

**ORDER OF
SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 9, 2015. 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 Rodney Dwight Watters, certificate 259585, as a result of his arrest for; one count of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 1st degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014); and two counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 3rd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Mr. Watters may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under his instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Watters' educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Mr. Watters of the summary suspension, as well as, the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Watters holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has one year of teaching experience. Mr. Watters had been employed by the Lee County School District (District) since August 2014 as a kindergarten teacher at Bishopville Primary School (School). On June 28, 2015, one of the victims informed her mother that Mr. Watters had touched her genital area and that he had also done so to the victim's sisters. On June 29, 2015, the victim's mother asked her other two daughters about Mr. Watters and they confirmed that he had also touched them inappropriately. On the same day, the victim's mother filed a complaint with the South Congaree Police Department.

On July 7, 2015, Mr. Watters was arrested and charged with; one count of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 1st degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014); and two counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 3rd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Mr. Watters may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under his instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Watters' educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Mr. Watters of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

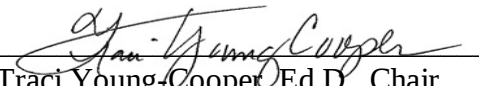
"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann § 59-5-10 (2004) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of Mr. Watters' inappropriate encounters of a sexual nature with three female minors and his arrest for one count of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 1st degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014); and two counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 3rd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(A) (Supp. 2014); he has engaged in unprofessional conduct, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude, and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed. The Chair also finds that there is reason to believe that Mr. Watters may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students and that emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Rodney Dwight Watters, certificate 259585, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Mr. Watters of the summary

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suspension, as well as, the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate. The suspension of Mr. Watters' educator certificate 259585 shall be immediately reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Traci Young Cooper, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
July 9, 2015