

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Meghan Colleen Dougherty,)
)
Certificate 258621)
_____)

**ORDER OF
SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 31, 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 Meghan Colleen Dougherty, certificate 258621, as a result of her arrest for Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2014).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Dougherty may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Dougherty's 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 Ms. Dougherty of the summary suspension, as well as, the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Dougherty holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over nine (9) years of teaching experience. Ms. Dougherty had been employed by the Greenville County School District (District) since August 2012 as a physical education teacher at Hillcrest Middle School (School). She also coached girls' soccer, volleyball, and intramural sports from 2012-2014. The District received a report from the mother of a female student that Ms. Dougherty had allegedly been involved an inappropriate relationship with her eighth grade daughter who was a student at the School. On March 26, 2015, the District discussed the allegations with Ms. Dougherty. Ms. Dougherty immediately resigned from her position with the District. The District promptly reported the allegations to the Simpsonville Police Department and to the

SCDE. On March 27, 2015, Ms. Dougherty was arrested and charged with Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2014), based on an investigation into allegations that concluded Ms. Daugherty had engaged in sexual battery upon a fourteen year old female victim on more than one occasion between January 4, 2015, and March 25, 2015, in Simpsonville, South Carolina.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Dougherty may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Dougherty's 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 Ms. Dougherty 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 Ms. Dougherty's inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a minor student and her arrest for Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2014); she 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 Ms. Dougherty may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students and that emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Meghan Colleen Dougherty, certificate 258621, 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 Ms. Dougherty of the summary suspension, as well as, the possible

suspension or revocation of her educator certificate. The suspension of Ms. Dougherty's educator certificate 258621 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
March 31, 2015