

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of Revocation
of the Educator Certificate of
Daniel Ray Elliott,
Certificate 262708

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ORDER OF REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 14, 2016. On April 6, 2016, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Daniel Ray Elliott, by regular and certified mail, informing him that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate on the grounds of unprofessional conduct. Mr. Elliott received the written notice, as evidenced by the signed mail receipt dated April 8, 2016. He has not responded to this notice and is now in default. After considering the evidence presented concerning Mr. Elliott's unprofessional conduct, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Elliott's educator certificate 262708, effective June 14, 2016.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Elliott received his South Carolina educator license in 2012 through reciprocity with Virginia. He has four years of experience and has been employed with the Horry County School District since 2013.

On May 29, 2015, the Horry County School District (District) notified the SCDE that employee Daniel Ray Elliott had resigned from his position as a teacher and drama coach at Myrtle Beach High School (School). Mr. Elliot was put on administrative leave on May 14, 2016 after allegations that he had violated District policy concerning student/teacher boundaries and had engaged in inappropriate behavior with a 15-year-old female student at the school. Effective June 5, 2016, Mr. Elliott was allowed to resign in lieu of termination.

During the investigation, multiple witnesses observed Mr. Elliott's unprofessional conduct with the female student. Witnesses testified that Mr. Elliot would lock his office door. When he stood to unlock the door, the witnesses observed the student lying on the couch in Mr. Elliott's office. Mr. Elliott admits to giving the student keys to the school and his car, but claims that the keys were used for school related purposes. Several students attested to have seen Mr. Elliott in the passenger seat of his car with the female student driving. Other students reported

that the light physical interactions between Mr. Elliott and the female student made them “uncomfortable.” The District found Mr. Elliott and the female student were constantly absent on the same days, and a six page letter from Mr. Elliott to the female student was turned in as evidence. In the letter, Mr. Elliott refers to the student as a fellow professional, a friend, and finally a daughter before ending the letter by thanking the student for being his “person.”

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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. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Elliott engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of his inappropriate relationship with a 15-year-old female student during his employment as a teacher with the District.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to revoke educator certificate 262708 issued in the name of Daniel Ray Elliott. The revocation of Mr. Elliott’s educator certificate 262708 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: _____

Michael R. Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
June 14, 2016